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MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE



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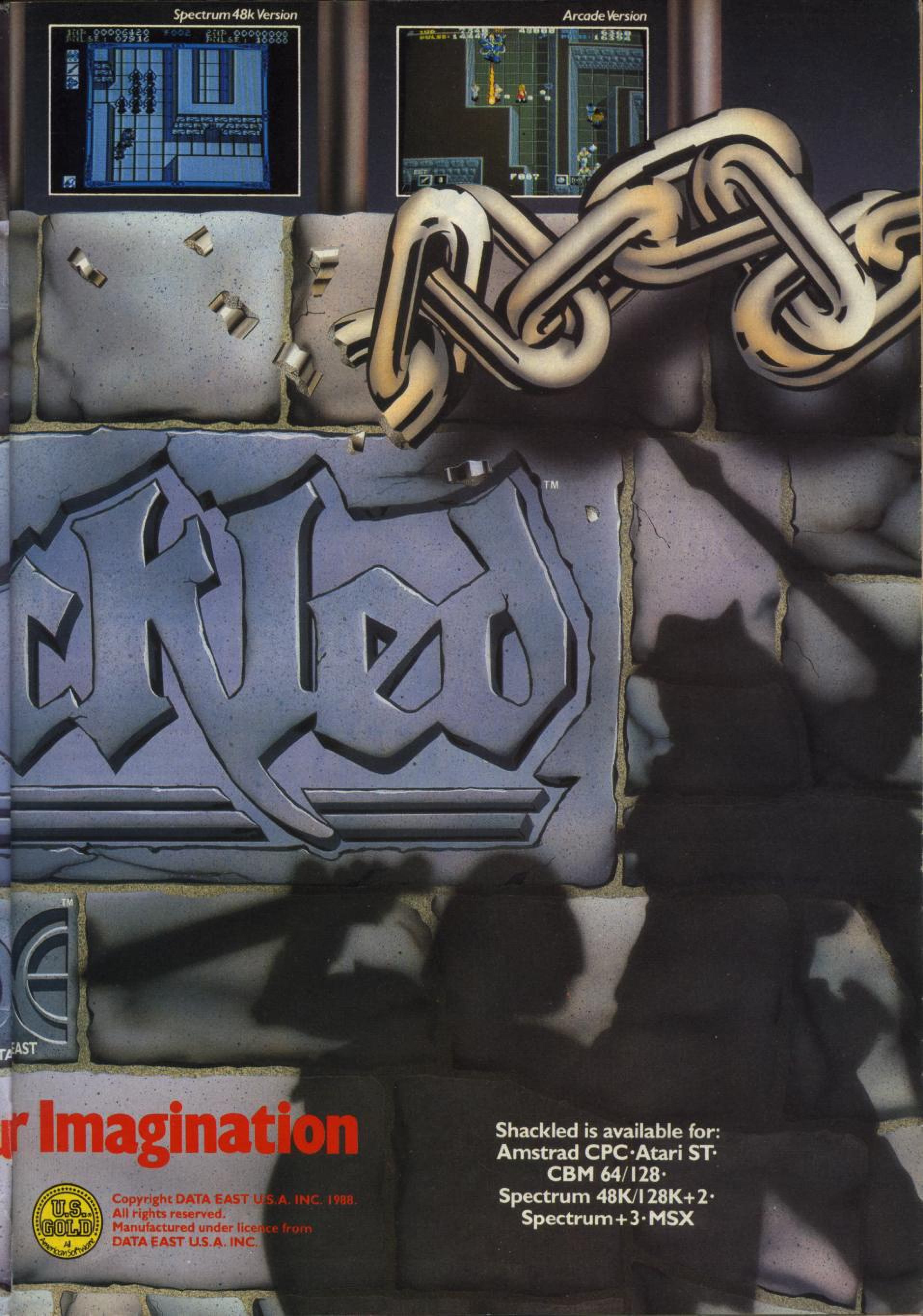
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ZZAP! ZED

FIVE GO MAD IN LUDLOW

Honestly – you let one new reviewer into the building, and the next minute everyone's wanting in! One who did manage to scale the walls, and has now become a permanent addition to the ZZAP! office (we can't fit him back through the door) is a certain Gordon Leslie Houghton, who hails from Blackburn in Lancashire. He recently graduated from Oxford University with a degree in English (but we don't hold that against him) and has come to Ludlow to apply his literary bent to writing reviews.

He used to be the sporting type, but has now joined the Lounge Lizard Elite, and saves his energy for the odd joystick waggling session and the occasional jog-cum- wobble to the sandwich shop, where he often shows an impressive turn of speed.



When it comes to loading things into his 64, *Spindizzy*, *Sentinel*, *Dropzone* and *Wizball* are often his first choice, and when he's tired of wibbling his joystick he's usually found with his nose in a book – something pretentious like Mediaeval religious literature. His Walkman oft rings to the sounds of the Smiths, Rush and Phillip Glass (although not at the same time), while his cravings for soap operas usually result in him ogling Michelle, getting into Prisoner Cell Block H and visiting Neighbours. He also enjoys watching Woody Allen and horror films ('the more gore the better') and driving his girlfriend's Citroen 2CV through walls ('that's what comes from having a dice with a Robin Reliant'). His exemplary tea-making is also appreciated around the office . . .

With that, I bid you farewell – until next month.

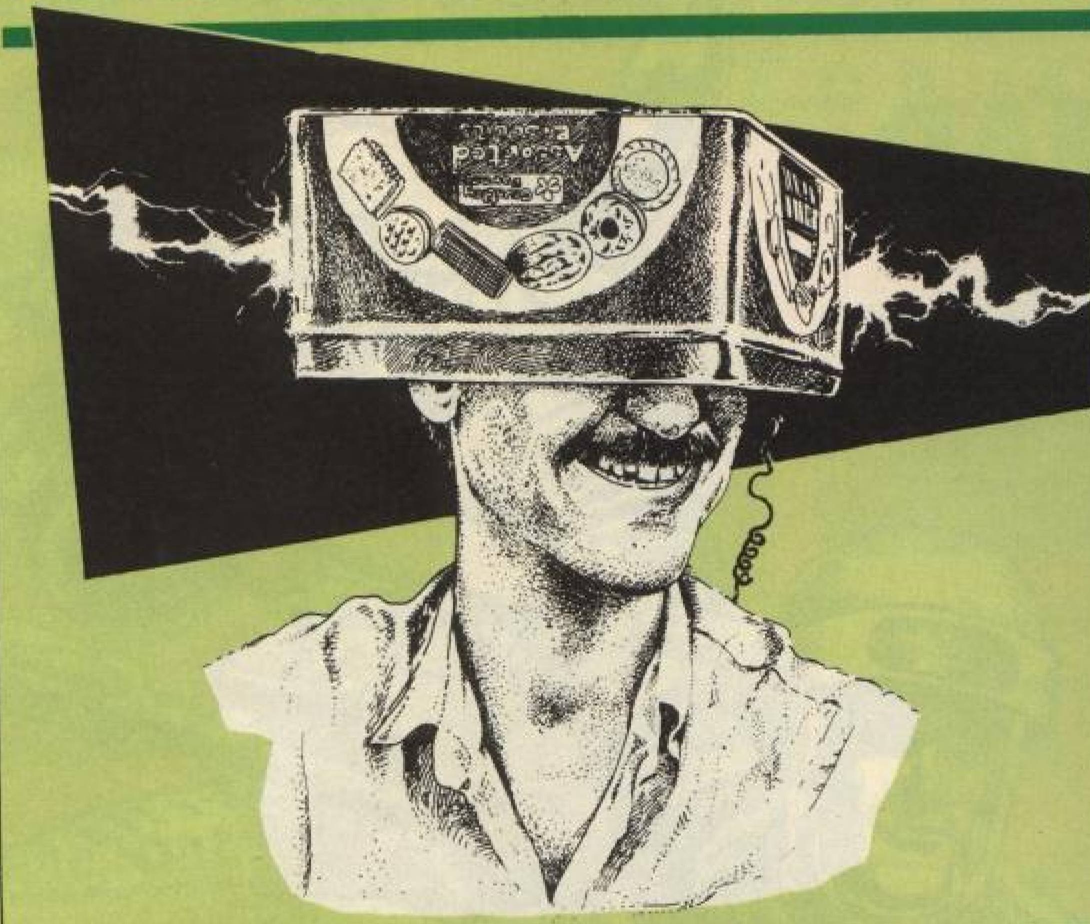
Julian Rignall



ADVERTISERS INDEX

GAMES REVIEWED

Mel Croucher's



UNDER THE BAUD-WALK

BICENTENARY OF ABORIGINES' DISCOVERY OF CAPTAIN COOK (Gottany Gay, Ventriloquism Festival)

I'm very happy to see that clairvoyants are being employed by a certain weekly computer publication, which I will call, for the sake of example you understand, COMPUTER TIRADE WEAKLY. The poor misguided reviewer tells me this over lunch in a wine bar not a million miles away from Soho square. Furthermore this reviewer of the Amstrad PPC is about to flee the country and ship out to Germany, after filing a thousand or so words on the merits of the neat little portable machine. The review is well written, nicely balanced and full of snippets of analysis and recommendations. Trouble is, my Perrier-drinking companion hasn't clapped eyes on one yet. No wonder he's taking the next boat out!

COMIC RELIEF DAY (American Embassy, Beirut)

I'm even more of a role model than usual these days. Those witty folk who dwell in the depths of wicked Covent Garden known as THE EDGE are trying very hard to slander me in their wonderful *Inside Outing*, but why have they spelled my name wrong? 'Old Man Crutcher and his failed experiments' indeed! I'll ignore their depiction of me as a loony alcoholic, and treat their allegation that I married into the nobility for financial reasons with the contempt that it deserves. No, what really hurts is the bit in the game concerning the giant canary; an obvious reference to my dear departed parrot. This is in very poor taste, as The Edge's **CHERI LANGDELL** is well aware. I was greatly miffed when I caught galloping psittacosis from Percy, my parrot, and mocking the afflicted is a base form of humour, young lady, and is something I myself have never ever been guilty of. The disease is most unpleasant and it resembles typhoid fever mixed with pneumonia, it involves vampires draining armfuls of bloody away to send to mad professor's labs and it very nearly killed me. What a pity that *Inside Outing* is such a neat adventure. I can't find a single thing to criticise in it.

FIRST DAY OF PARROT SHOOTING SEASON

Like I say, I don't mind being a role model for the software industry, but I do wish my disciples would get their facts right. SUPERIOR SOFTWARE have also gone and spelt my name in *Bone Cruncher*, although I do admit that the grey skinned guy picking his nose is a very good likeness of my noble self. It was this particular nose that prevented me taking my full part in Comic Relief Day, so fleshy and grease laden is it. Every time I smiled, which was about twice a minute, my red nose-cosy shot off and landed in the Smirnoff. So by nightfall I was forced to abandon my sponsored tap dancing marathon, and switch scams for a sponsored nose missile competition, fifty pee for every time I hit the glass. We raised a lot that night. Fifty pee as well as glasses. It's so comforting to know that I'm part of an industry that has pioneered raising money for charity by way of acting like a bunch of idiots for years. Wasn't it that great man of letters **BOB MONKHOUSE** who said 'novelty is always a variation of the past'. Or was it **CARLOS FUENTES**, I really can't remember.

NATIONAL SILLY NAMES DAY (United Arab Enemas)

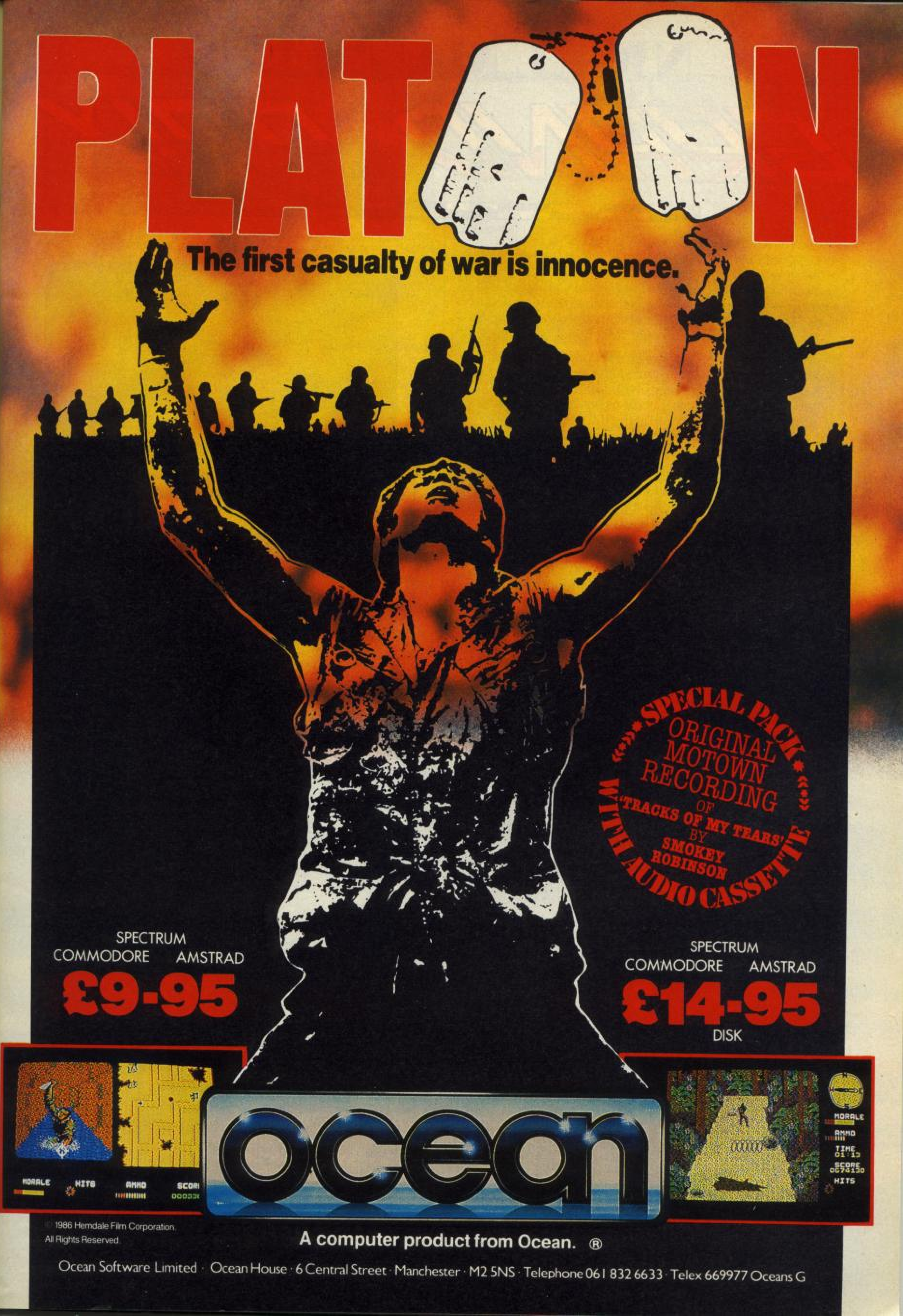
My postie is suffering a double hernia this morning, thanks to all you vindictive Baudwalkers sending me requests for translations of Software Celebrities Silly Pseudonyms. I told you last month that I'd never stoop to this level of cheap comedy again, so here goes. According to my German dictionary, the perpetrators of MAGIC BYTES' weird and whacky wee cartoon number *Clever and Smart* are **OLAF MAROHN**, which means 'make mine a rum and black', **VOLKER MAROHN** ('I have unfortunately puked up my run and black') and **HOLGER AHRENS** ('may I borrow your toothbrush'). GO's *Thunderceptor* was programmed by ERNIEWARE, which means 'Benny Hill really gets me down' in Dutch. Then we have *Tetris* from MIRRORSOFT, dreamed up by **ALEXI PASZITNOV**, which is Russian for 'Joan Collins has got a spotty father' and the game was written by **VAGIM GERASIMOV**, meaning 'take that blank expression off your face'. Unfortunately my lawyer advises me not to print the English translation from the Latvian of the name of ARIOLASOFT's UK supremo, **WILLI CARMINCKE**. Spoilsport.

FLEA-BAITING OUTLAWED (except Ludlow)

I remember **ALAN SUGAR** in those far off days of my youth, or was it his youth, when he was flogging off car aerials in Wembley flea market, but I never thought that he'd be one for giving away freebies without maximising on publicity. Well, you live and learn, and I am delighted to find that my Amstrad PCW8512 contains some incredible features that have been kept amusingly secret. Did you know that all the time one of these machines is powered up it has the ability to generate beautiful synthetic music? That's right folks, just turn on your radio sets and tune 'em to Long Wave within a range of up to 100 metres or so, and join in the fun. You get a choice of a copulating robot disco effect, or a beautifully sampled version of a drowning deaf aid, and it never seems to stop. Now some of you might find this a bit annoying, or perhaps you've got a neighbour who is fed up with Women's Hour being interfered with by copulating robots or drowning deaf aids, but what I say is they just ain't got no sense of humour. Some time ago I phoned up Amstrad's charming mouthpiece **MIKE MORDACHAI**, and asked him if there was any way of preventing the PCW's musical bent. Honest as ever, he told me, 'Well Mel, there's nothing you can do to filter out the interference off our monitors. Try sticking your head in a tin box.' I am wearing my tin box at this very minute, and very fetching it is too. But I haven't got the heart to tell Amstrad that the transmission of radio interference is illegal. I mean to say, taxi intercoms, police radios and ghetto-blasted ambulances need a bit of jollying up, don't they. Don't they?

SAY WHENSDAY

Something is very wrong here in Ludlow. Behind the mask of normality, buried deep below the veneer of civilisation, festering within the fake facade of fashionable finery, the unspeakable has happened. Yes folks, ZZAP! 64 has kept the same Editor for two months running! I have no rational explanation for this inexplicable state of affairs. But I fear the worst. I mean everyone knows that it is a tradition to grab, say, the geezer who comes round with the sandwiches or the gent who cleans out the bogs, and make them editor for a month. All I can think is that last month's Boss snuffed it sometime between doughnut break and opening time, and Dot Matrix our sinister cleaning lady, has had him stuffed and mounted and nailed to his desk. When I say stuffed and mounted, I'm talking taxidermy, I hasten to add. Anyway, don't fret dear Baudwalkers. I'll let you know if any funny smells start to seep out of Mission Control. Any funnier than usual that is. Until next month, or the last part of 100 All-Time Computing Greats, whichever comes the sooner. Toodle-pip.


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FIREFLY

Special FX/Ocean, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick with keys

Returning to Earthafter a decade of scientific research,the interstellar mothership Firefly discovers the Solar System is covered by a vast, chrome grid inhabited by Mechanoid dynasts. Adopting the role of Firefly commander, it's the player's task to destroy the enemy's grid system which contains their vital power source.

There are two basic screen displays: the Mechanoids' grid and the playing area of each sector. The grid consists of a combination of five types of area, each holding unique properties: robot-free 'Dead' Zones are in the player's control, Planetary Sectors are unbreachable and Robot Occupied Areas need to be deactivated. The System Power Source is the goal and usually the furthest point from the starting position, and there are also Unconstructed Regions (designated by arrows), where the player is launched into a sub-game, consisting of an alternating series of thumbs up or down. If the player presses fire on a thumbs-down, the grid is rearranged (sometimes with unfortunate consequences), and the Firefly is returned to the start. Thumbs-up results in the area being deactivated.

Entering a sector reveals an eight-way scrolling playing area with an information panel below. This displays a direction bar, current score, number of ships remaining, the number of energy units (or 'Yokas') collected, plus fuel and damage meters.

The ship is damaged by aliens and their missiles, incorrect teleportal operation, failure to overload the energy point or by entering the point with insufficient energy units; if the level reaches zero, a life is lost. However, the main function on the panel is the radar, upon which all major obstacles, teleports and energy points are shown.

Four energy points are destroyed to shut down the sector: these release 'Yokas', four of which are collected to allow access to a sub-game. This consists of two hands (thumbs up or down), which alternate at an increasingly rapid speed depending on the number already deactivated. Teleports obtain a similar sub-game, in which a light races around a circle of red and green dots; only three successive green contacts results in a successful teleport.

Shooting aliens with the Firefly's oct-o-phonic plasma disruptor balls results in deposits which are collected for occasionally favourable results. Additionally, predetermined objects are picked up to release droplets from the landscape which hold positive effects for the ship. When a sector is completed, the damage and fuel levels are replenished.



As a concept, Firefly **owes much to that other Ocean 'grid' game,** Mutants, **and a host of innovative features make it just as compulsive. Graphically it's excellent: beautifully drawn, colourful and very detailed sectors offset nicely animated and individual sprites; only an occasional flickering mars the vibrant variety. The sound echoes this high standard: despite the couple of derivative effects (**Who Dares Wins **grenade explosions), the overall atmosphere is superb: suitable bubbling, bouncing and buzzing noises assist a soundtrack which is genuinely good. Overall, the gameplay is attractive: the desire to deactivate the next sector and reach the Power Source is strong, the Unconstructed Zones, random location selection and sub-games all add spice. Hyperactive on-screen sprites result in an often furious balance of blasting and collecting. However, there are two main objections: the luck element when shutting down the final energy point can be infuriating because it's such an integral part of the gameplay (although there's a way around it); similarly, having to completely clear a sector again when a life is lost is annoying. However, set these minor irks aside and you have an innovative, compulsive and enjoyable game.**



I was instantly attracted by Firefly's **excellent graphics and soundtrack, but as time went on, some very annoying quirks in the gameplay threw a wet blanket over my enthusiasm. It all seems very exciting at first, but unfortunately the random element in the teleport and shut-down sub-games proves too much, especially since they form such an important crux in the gameplay – I'd much prefer that skill dictated progress, rather than an element of luck. It's a shame that** Firefly **is so let down by such relatively inconsequential flaws. Still, at least the overall slickness and superb presentation bode well for future Special FX productions.**



Having witnessed Firefly**'s good looks and great Fred Gray sounds from a distance, I was set for a terrific game. On actually playing, though, I found myself at the mercy of some awful reaction tests. The main maze negotiation section is fine: it plays well and boasts some very nicely drawn and coloured graphics, with lots of variety and imagination in the shooting action. Unfortunately, progress is only made through the grid if you can beat the 'Gamble' sub-games. While they aren't too bad at the beginning, after the third or fourth energy unit it becomes a question of 'close your eyes and pray.' It may sound like a minor niggle but it's quite annoying to play such an otherwise well put together game only to have progress halted by a pair of minor subsections. As it stands,** Firefly **is a game of luck and skill, with the priority of these requirements in that order.**

▶ **The first release on the Special FX label –** ***Firefly***



PRESENTATION 79%
Informative instructions and clear screen display, but lacking in useful options such as a game save.

GRAPHICS 84%
Bright, varied and detailed backdrops accompany a host of colourful sprites.

SOUND 81%
Decent soundtrack, with varied and appropriately good in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 82%
The grid system and random sector location make completing an area very compelling.

LASTABILITY 68%
Plenty of sectors, graded difficulty and innovative features, but the interest may wane for some.

OVERALL 79%
A beautifully-presented and rewarding game marred by excessive emphasis on luck.

THE TRAIN

Electronic Arts, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

It's August, 1944. The Nazi's stranglehold on Europe has begun to loosen, and the Germans are evacuating with their spoils in tow. A secret train stands on the outskirts of Metz in France, holding a cargo of valuable art treasures which are destined for Berlin and Hitler's own private collection.

However, a plan is afoot to foil the Führer. The player takes the role of Pierre LeFeu, a French Resistance leader whose mission is to capture the train and take the stolen art treasures back through enemy lines to rendezvous with the Allies at Riviere in Normandy.

The first action screen is set in the Metz railway yard where the train is waiting to leave for Germany. LeFeu gives covering fire while his injured comrade, Le Duc, runs across the tracks to collect the points switch – switching tracks effectively enables the player to select the length and difficulty of the train's route to Riviere.

Enemy troops occupy the station and their silhouettes are seen in the windows as they attempt to get a shot at LeFeu. A spray of automatic gunfire tracks along the ground toward LeFeu, who is forced to duck before being hit.



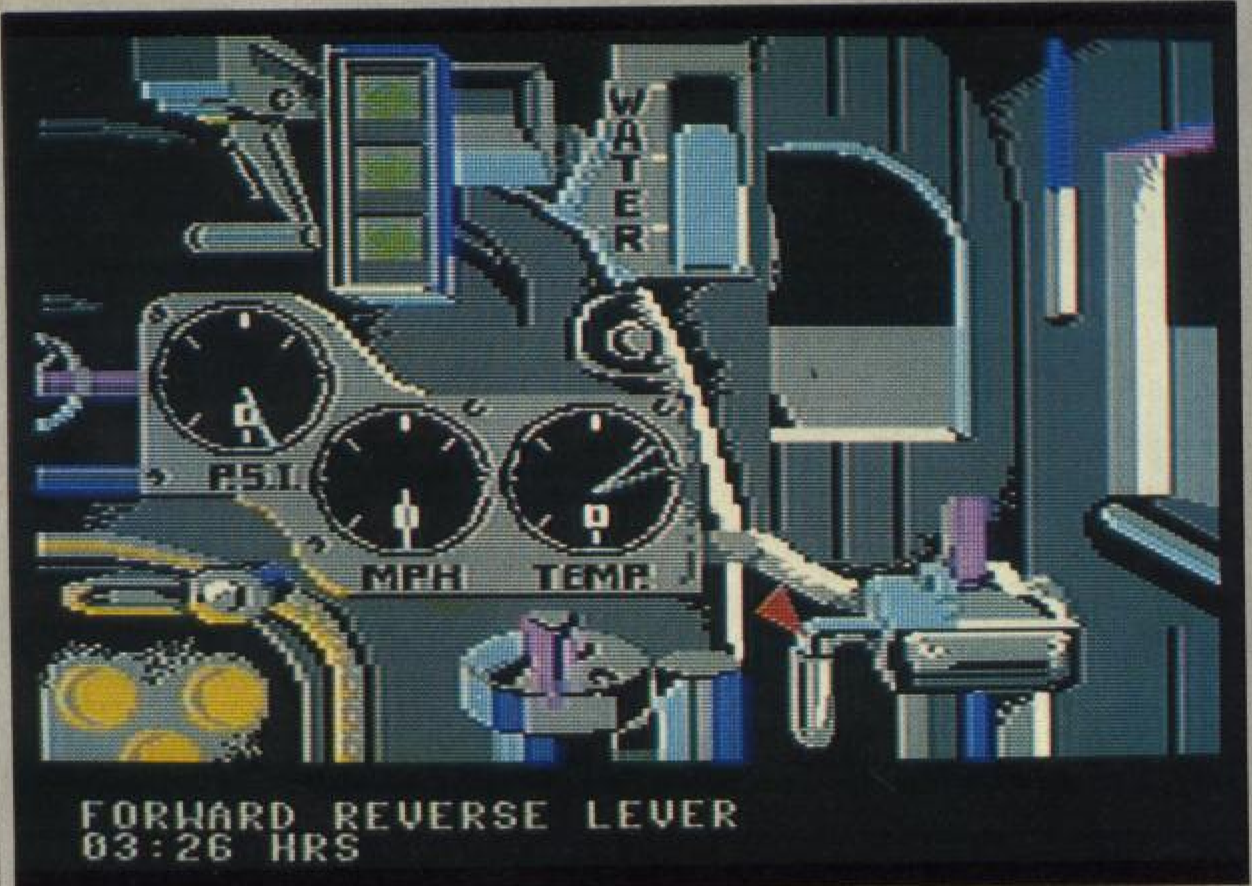
Based on the superb 1966 Burt Lancaster film of the same name, The Train **is packed with atmosphere and playability. The action is very much in the** Dambusters **and** Ace of Aces **mould, but this time the player drives a train across wartime France. Each of the scenes is well thought out, and all contribute to the incredible feeling of involvement – you can do just about anything you like within the game's environment. The shooting sections are really tense as you try and out-gun the German guards and entering stations to relay messages to the Resistance and read up German intelligence is great, especially when you're trying to plan a route. My favourite part, though, is actually driving the train itself. The driver's cab screen is extremely well drawn – there are plenty of levers to pull and wheels to twist, and you've also got to keep an eye on the fuel and pressure gauges, just in case more coal has to be shovelled into the furnace. Being able to pull the whistle is the icing on the cake! As well as driving the train, you've also got to keep an eye on the map, and watch out for enemy attack – the action certainly keeps you busy!** The Train **is a very absorbing and entertaining action game – catch it.**



The end of the line



From the same mould as *Ace of Aces* comes another superb arcade-style simulation. The complete package is brilliantly put together to produce an action-packed, beautifully evocative and compulsive game. The neatly drawn graphics are more than merely functional and really create an appropriately sombre and austere wartime atmosphere. The train interior contains some particularly striking effects: the warm furnace glow, accompanied by a low, fiery rumbling, the variable rhythms of the engine, the whistle: all sights and sounds are spot-on. It really appeals to a combination of the urge to be an engine driver and the desire to outwit or destroy an enemy; there's a constant need to keep an eye on the gauges or watch the skies for fighters. It's a very easy game to get into, and even if you complete the mission, there's always the desire to do it again with less damage or at a more difficult level. What I particularly like is the total freedom of movement: you can switch points, re-visit stations, reverse, change lines, anything! However, this leads to my only reservation: the cassette version may not be so fluid. Otherwise it's excellent: good instructions, quick multiload, useful status screens and good occasional effects: I've no hesitation in recommending it.



Steamin' and a-rollin' through occupied France



You might think The Train **would appeal solely to loco buffs, but this really isn't the case. I'd put this game more in the class of an interactive war movie, because the scenic graphics and realistic sound effects bestow it with a definite film-style atmosphere. All of the little shooting sub-games are most enjoyable, and the simulated engine-driving is particularly well implemented, with the control method and the advice from Le Duc cutting out any of the confusion which can mar a simulation. What adds to this game no end are the numerous impressive little touches. Notable examples are the roaring sound and the flickering highlights which appear on the control surfaces as the firebox door is opened, and then there are the remarkable steam whistle and aero-engine effects.** The Train **is one game I would recommend to anyone. Let's just hope the multiload cassette version isn't too tedious . . .**

LeFeu's shots are directed by a floating cursor, and he keeps the enemy occupied long enough for Le Duc to get back to the train.

Once the points are switched, LeFeu takes control of the engine, with three control screens at the player's disposal: two perspective views are given to front and rear of the train, allowing targetting of the machine guns in case of air attack, and the third view is that from the footplate showing the train's controls. All the engine's vital aspects are maintained from here, including stoking the boiler, throttle and brake controls and checking the necessary gauges.

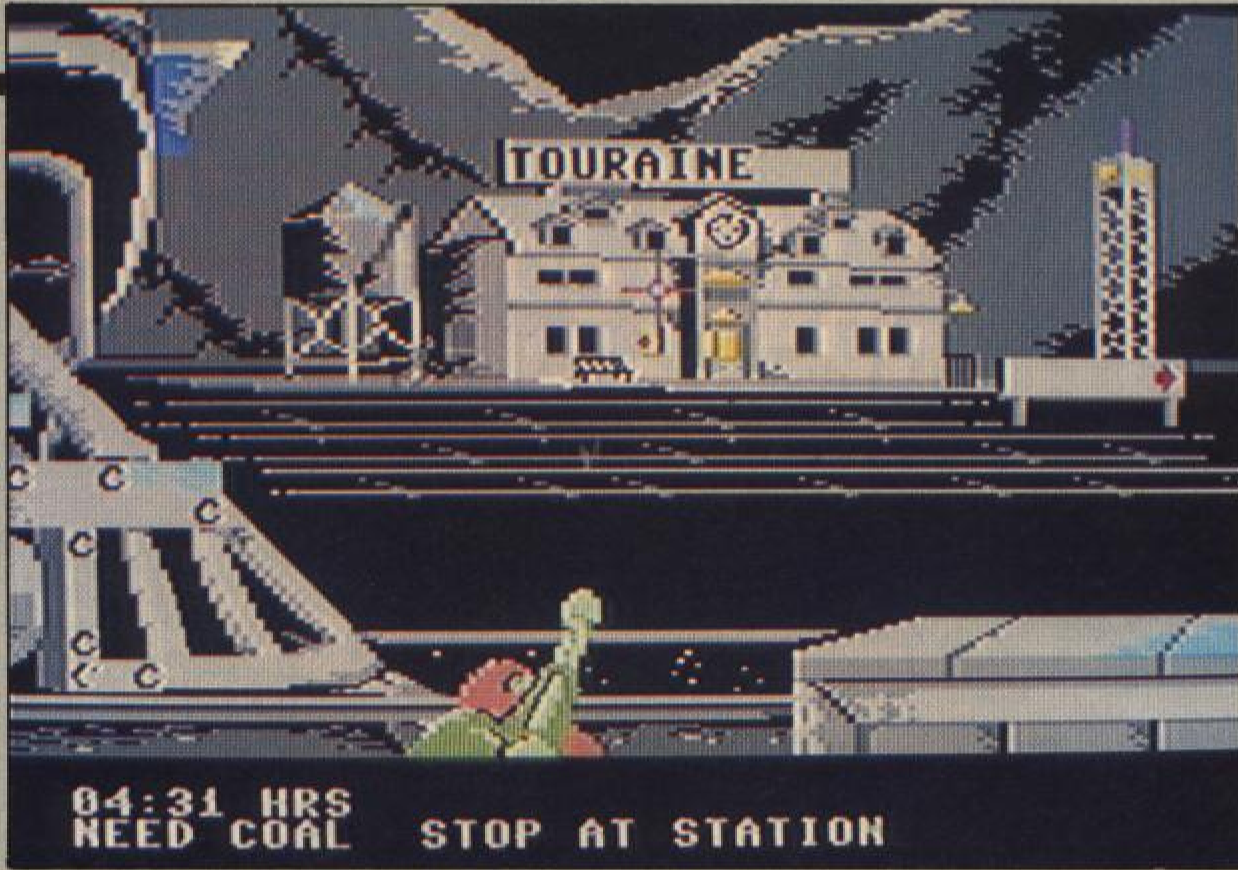
Le Duc constantly proffers advice during the trip, and gives warnings should certain gauges begin to run too high or too low. He also warns of imminent arrivals at stations, bridges or points switches, allowing the player time to slow the train to a stop or signal his intended route via the whistle. A map screen showing the train's position is also available during the journey to give information on what is coming next along the line.

Stations are captured *en route* by machine-gunning all the occupying troops. This allows LeFeu to read German intelligence messages pertaining to the state of certain sections of the track. The station's telegraph can also be used to send messages to the Resistance, calling for repairs or for their help in securing an occupied bridge or station.

On reaching a bridge, a view of the river appears with patrolling enemy gunboats. The boats waste no time in firing on the engine, but are destroyed with the 155mm cannon mounted on a flat-car at the centre of the train, by adjusting the cannon elevation to obtain the correct range. Failing to destroy the boats in time sees the engine put out of action by a hail of enemy fire.

The engine is also under constant threat of bombing by enemy aircraft which frequently buzz the train. Fast and accurate aiming of the machine guns at the front and rear of the train are required to fend off these attacks.

Journey's end arrives when either the mission is complete or cannot be continued because of damage to the engine or artworks, or death of the crew. The player's score is then rated on the basis of aircraft, soldiers and boats destroyed, and is given status percentages on damage to the boiler, brakes and the artworks, as well as coal left in the hopper and number of requests made of the Resistance.



▶ Only you can stop it – at Touraine station



▲ French Railways: we've got there

▶ Machine guns blazing as the Luftwaffe go strafing



NB: DISK VERSION ONLY.
A CASSETTE VERSION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AND WILL BE RATED SEPARATELY WHEN RELEASED.

PRESENTATION 95%
In-game difficulty selection and an abundance of other neat touches. Frequent, but rapid disk access.

GRAPHICS 83%
Detailed and superbly atmospheric.

SOUND 78%
Realistic effects make up for an imaginative but raucous version of 'La Marseillaise'.

HOOKABILITY 82%
Once the opening sequence is mastered, the game opens up and becomes increasingly addictive.

LASTABILITY 83%
Several increasingly difficult routes to completion, but some sections may eventually becomes repetitive.

OVERALL 87%
Another excellent Accolade 'simulation', which should have a very wide appeal.

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FOR ONE OR TWO SIMULTANEOUS PLAYERS

General Alexander Bonn, C.I.F. US Forces in Central America – has been seized by a band of revolutionaries and held captive in his own headquarters. Before his final capture he relayed a mayday which you and your buddy picked up.
Your plane crashlands in the dense jungle some distance from the headquarters. After deciding whether to go it alone or attempt the rescue together you set off. You are deep in guerilla territory. On all sides gather trained marksmen and combateers, determined to stop you. It soon becomes apparent that you lack the supplies to win, but win through you must.
Ambush enemy tanks and use them yourself. Collect fuel and grenades left by the enemy as they retract. Show no mercy, for you are the Ikari Warrior.

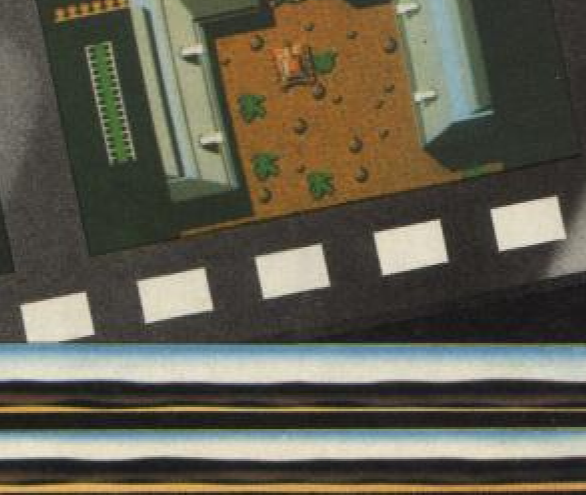
RELEASE DATE: 28 March 1988

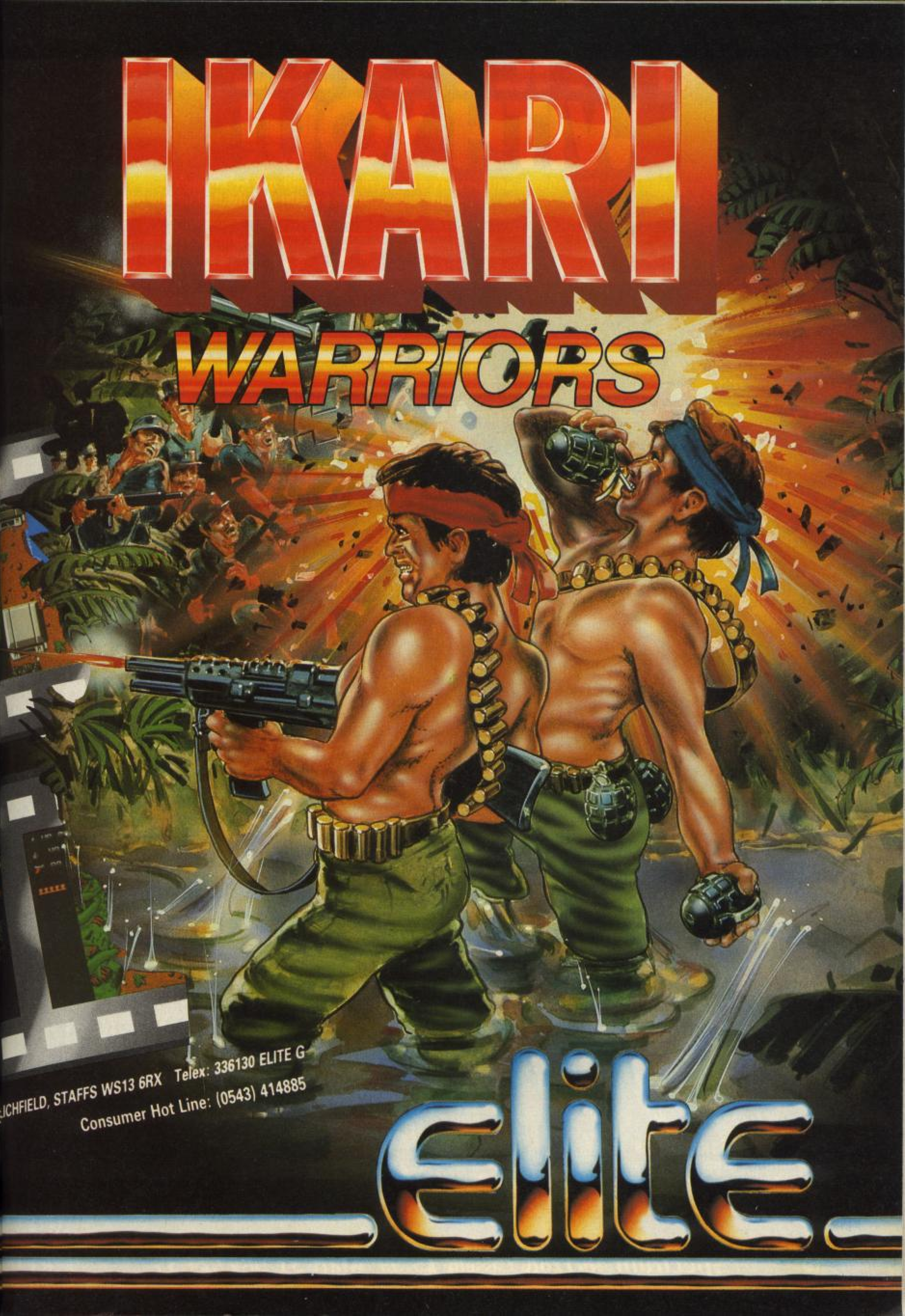




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BLACK LAMP

Firebird, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

Jolly Jack the Jester, basher of bladders and singer of songs, is in love. The object of his desire is Princess Grizelda, daughter of King Maxim, whose kingdom, Allegoria, has been plagued by discord ever since the nine enchanted lamps were stolen by a clutch of evil dragons.



Platform games are becoming sadly scarce on the 64, but every so often a good one comes along. Black Lamp is such an example, and has plenty of platform action set across a sprawling map. The going is extremely tough, and the poor old Jester is mobbed by hostiles from the very beginning – but put a little thought into your actions, and watch what the creatures do, and it isn't too difficult to avoid their attentions. Compiling a map is essential if Jack is to retrieve all the lamps and make his way around Allegoria's maze of villages, green meadows and huge castle without getting lost. Supporting the enjoyable gameplay are some big and nicely animated sprites, colourful backdrops and a really psychedelic tune. The scrolling is a little on the poor side, but otherwise there are no flaws. Black Lamp is extremely challenging, very addictive and comes thoroughly recommended to platform fans.

Wily King Maxim eventually succumbs to their pleas of marriage on one condition: that Jack seeks out the Dragons and returns the nine lamps to their rightful places, thus restoring happiness to his kingdom. Mad, besotted fool that he is, Jack agrees . . .

Jack's quest takes place across the land of Allegoria and is displayed as individual static interior screens, and horizontally scrolling exteriors. Exits are found in any of four directions, to front and rear of the screen through doorways and gates, and by leaving the screen to left and right.

The lamps are placed randomly within the landscape each time a game is played and the jester can only carry one at a time, so he must deliver each to one of 20 chests before picking up another. The eponymous black lamps are held by dragons, whose fireballs are severely damaging. These take many shots to kill before depositing their treasure.

Jack's actions are controlled from joystick and allow him to fire magic bolts, walk, jump and climb up and down ladders. The jester also has seven lives and a magic belt buckle courtesy of his friend Pratweezle; armed only with these and his gymnastic abilities, he confronts a host of opponents who reduce his energy in a variety of ways: werewolves bite, buzzards drop exploding skulls, imps unleash flashing flames of evil. Similarly, falling from heights severely depletes his strength.

Objects are collected which endow the Jester with assorted abilities: for example, shields provide limited immunity to enemy missiles and food replenishes energy. For every weapon collected, Jack is given 15 lethal shots. As the game progresses, the action grows ever faster and more frantic.

Should his quest prove successful, Jack's reward is the Princess's hand in marriage, and the restoration of harmony to Allegoria.



Had greater care been taken over setting the difficulty level and redefining the control method, Black Lamp could have been something really special. There are many points in its favour: a large, informative and humorous instruction booklet, an attractive range of characters and some cutely conceived backdrops. The music is excellent throughout, but unfortunately, there are no sound effects, so when the soundtrack grates, silence is the only alternative. The game has some graphical flaws: the scrolling is occasionally juddery and some of the characters are a bit chunky – the main sprite, however, is very appealing in his stripy trousers and jester's cap. The chief fault lies in the gameplay: it's slightly too difficult because the screens are always busy with creatures, most of whom are faster and more powerful than you; even though you're given seven lives, these can drain away very quickly. The control method only compounds the mistake: it's very awkward to face front or back, so that climbing ladders or exiting can be time-consumingly clumsy, with a resultant loss of energy. If you can overcome these annoyances, however, there's enough in the gameplay to maintain interest and enjoyment.



Underneath the glam exterior of Black Lamp, there lies a very simple game struggling (and occasionally managing) to get out. The graphics are startlingly good, with loads of nicely animated beasties tearing about the quaint and detailed backdrops. In fact, this proves to be one of its major faults: there are so many creatures hurling physical abuse, and they're so difficult to hit, let alone destroy, that you constantly feel part of an uphill struggle. I became quite annoyed by this incessant rain of missiles, and Jack is unable to duck or jump high enough to avoid the barrage. Once again the cartography crew should enjoy the exploration on offer here, but the blasting is too intermittent and the platform action too weak to be considered an extension of those genres. I would think twice about adding Black Lamp to your shopping list, but one pleasant feature that awaits potential purchasers is the incredibly good soundtrack, especially backing the high score table, which has some very 70's riffs and runs!



PRESENTATION 80%
Humourous instruction booklet, good screen display, but initially awkward control method.

GRAPHICS 86%
Cute, varied, detailed and pleasantly colourful.

SOUND 86%
Excellent soundtrack and equally good in-game tune; no sound effects, though.

HOOKABILITY 71%
High difficulty level and awkward control method could be repellent to many.

LASTABILITY 70%
Once hooked, the wealth of locations and creatures, plus the frantic search 'n' blast action proves quite addictive.

OVERALL 78%
A very appealing, but difficult platform collect 'em up.

. . . TRAZ

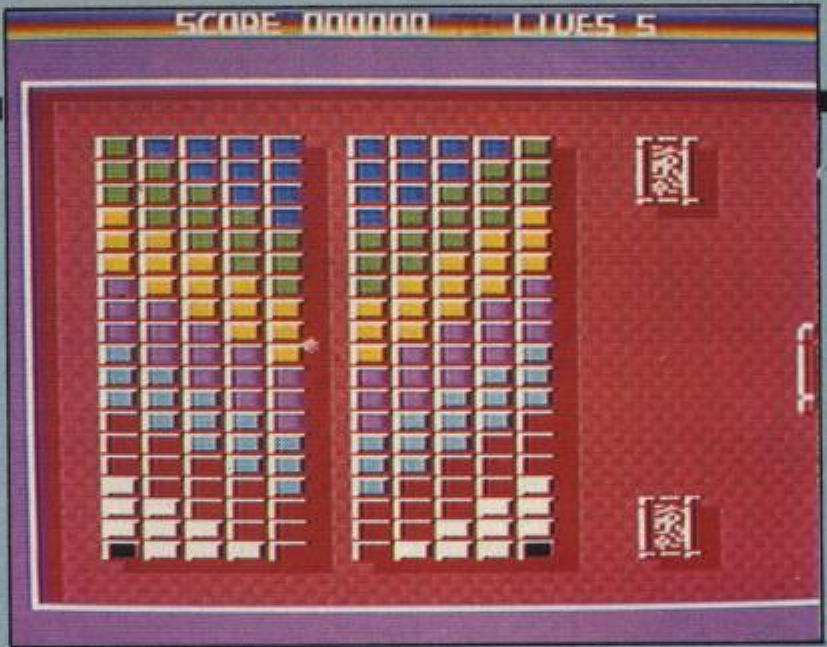
Cascade, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

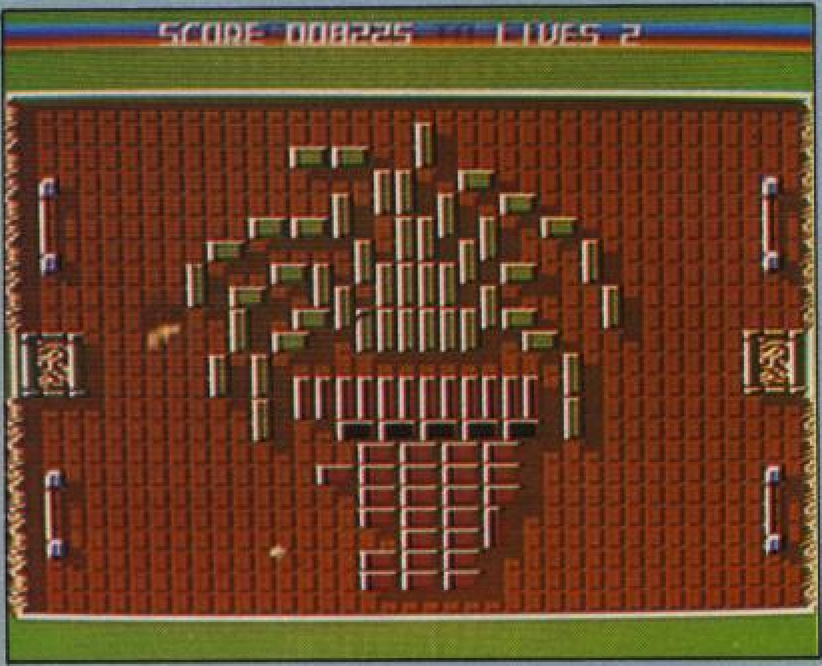
Continuing the great *Breakout* tradition comes the latest offering from Cascade, . . . *TRAZ* (the Transformable Arcade Zone).

Initially, three options are available from the title page: one and two-player modes, or entry into the construction set. Choosing either of the former options launches the participants into the game proper, which follows the task of escaping from TRAZ – an electronic prison – by breaking through each of the penitentiary's 64 cells.

Each cell is displayed full-screen and contains neutron bricks, all of which are destroyed on contact with the ball to reveal possible exits. Cells often have more then one bat, which are directed via the joystick and operate at two speeds, dependent upon whether or not the fire button is depressed. In two-player mode control of the opposing bats frequently swaps at random.

Cells also include indestructible blocks and a number of other fundamental components, such as traps, monster generators and





▲ ***Breakout* lives on: *TRAZ* from Cascade**



Since . . . Traz came into the office, ZZAP! Towers has been resounding to 'oohs' and 'ahs' as members of the team struggle away in two-player mode. Some would say that any Breakout variants coming out now have missed the boat. Well, if . . . Traz were a closer copy of the Arkanoid style then I would have to agree, but as it stands, it definitely has sufficient innovation to make it worthwhile. Frantically juggling nine balls with two horizontal bats and two vertical bats is a real laugh – even more so when you collect a question mark and the balls become invisible, begin spiralling or zip off at MACH 4. The variety and imagination that has gone into designing the screens, coupled with the idea of putting all the levels together to make a maze gives an extra urge to progress. On top of all this is one of the most comprehensive screen editors you'll ever see, making . . . Traz something worth getting your hands on.



◄ ***TRAZ***



This is the most addictive game I've played for ages. It requires an almost schizophrenic mental agility when you're trying to defend four 'goals' at the same time, especially if there are nine balls on screen! The extra features such as the refractive glass and mystery pills are brilliant, and the action can become unbelievably hectic as your reflexes are stretched to the limit. The presentation is similarly excellent, having some very clever and imaginative screen designs, all of which are frustratingly compulsive. Graphically, . . . Traz is very good: large, bright and extremely colourful backdrops with well-animated (if simplistic) sprites. The sound is unusually inventive for a game of this type, with a strong title tune and decent in-game effects. The package also contains the definitive Breakout construction set. . . . Traz is more than just a customised clone: it's a superb game in its own right.



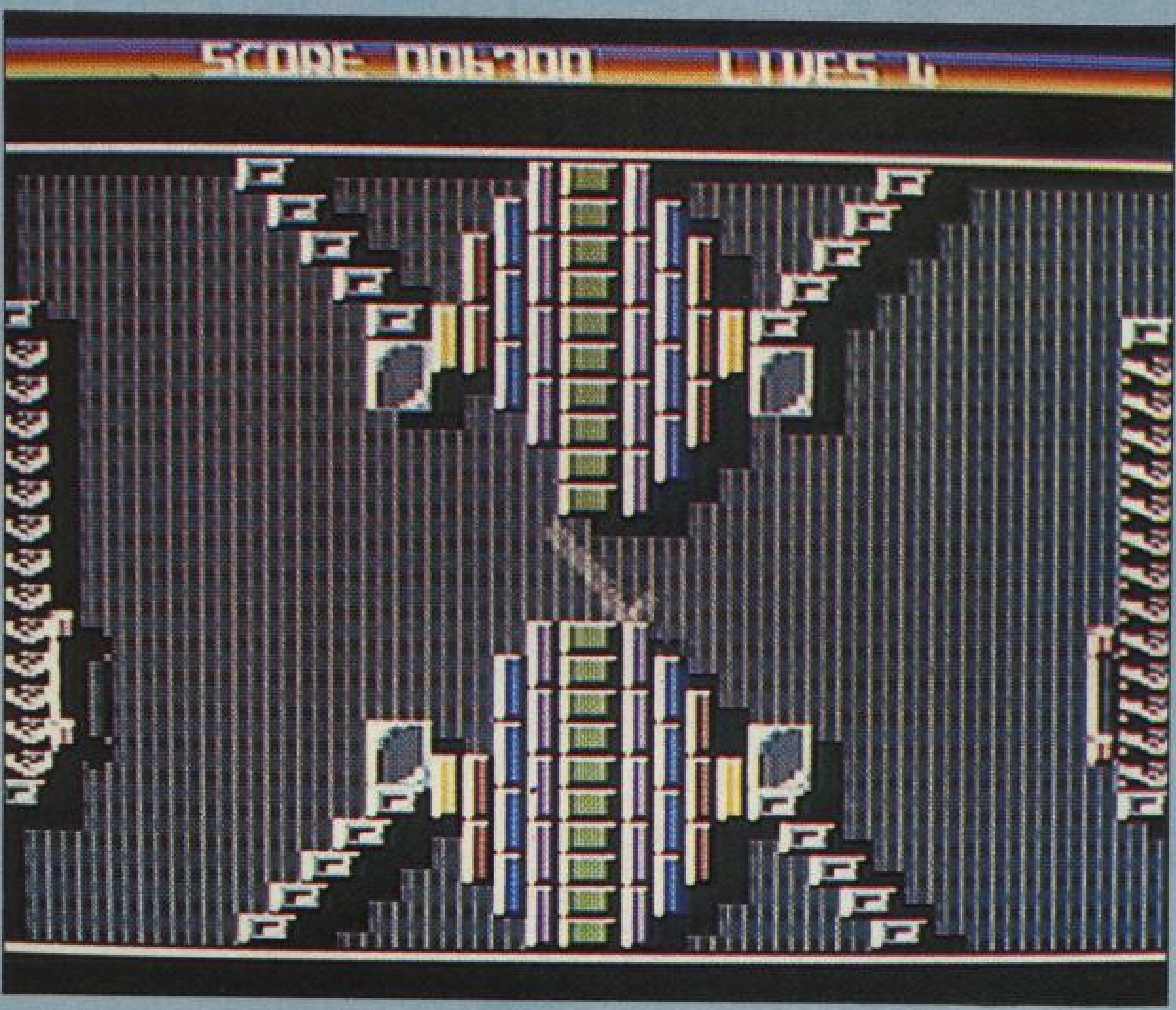
refractive glass, which sends the ball off at a variable angles.

When a brick is destroyed, it sometimes releases a mystery power pill in the shape of a question mark, which has a predetermined effect on the ball or bricks. These include gravity affected balls, fast and slow balls, dividing balls and lasers. Whenever a ball makes contact with the electronic 'goal', a life is lost – from both players in two-player mode.

A map of TRAZ can be accessed at any time to display the cells already visited and the current location. Once all 64 levels are breached, a gap appears in the outer perimeter and freedom is attained.

The program also supports a construction set which allows all the parameters of the game to be altered or an entirely new, sixty-four cell prison to be created.

► **One of the more devious screens to be negotiated . . .**





The saying that the simplest ideas are often the best definitely applies to the Breakout **genre, and** . . . Traz **is further proof of this. Graphically, it's great: fast, bright and colourful, varying from psychedelic to downright gaudy. Movement on the ball is smooth, and when there are several on screen at one time you'll need more than one pair of eyes to keep track! A nice touch is the random element which allows any of the 64 screens to appear at the start of play, making each game that little bit different. I enjoyed playing this game, but it's not perfect: there are one or two niggling faults, such as odd deflections from the edges of the bats, the overall difficulty of some screens (completing all 64 cells poses rather an immense task), and the annoying dependence on luck to remove the last few blocks. Still,** . . . Traz **is fun, and has a brilliant screen editor to fiddle with when you get bored.**

PRESENTATION 93%
Adequate instructions and options, excellent screen display and fully comprehensive construction kit.

GRAPHICS 81%
Well designed screens and convincing ball movement; reasonably bright and colourful.

SOUND 60%
Slightly annoying title tune, but unusually good in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 91%
The combination of devious *Breakout* format and individual customisations proves instantly addictive.

LASTABILITY 86%
Sixty-four levels of compulsive and often frantic action, with a screen designer for rainy days.

OVERALL 87%
A revivifying enhancement of a tired theme, and a compelling game in its own right.

SOKO-BAN

Mirrorsoft, £12.99 disk only, joystick with keys

As foreman of a large warehouse, it's the player's duty to relocate misplaced boxes to their assigned storage area. This is achieved by directing a mechanical warehouseman around the warehouse's 50 maze-like levels, pushing boxes as he goes.

The title screen shows the warehouseman in the lobby of the building in front of two elevators: one leads to the screen designer, the other to the warehouse.

Choosing to play signals the appearance of the player select screen, where one to four players enter their names, and select a time limit of up to 20 minutes.

The warehouseman reappears in the elevator, standing adjacent to the level select keypad. The preferred maze is selected by directing the workman's hand to the required buttons and keying in the desired number (01 to 50). The elevator then takes him to the correct level, which is loaded from disk.

The warehouse floors are viewed from above and contain four basic elements: walls, boxes, a storage area and the mechanical warehouseman. Boxes are relocated in the storage area but can only be pushed individually. An information panel at the foot of the screen displays the level, the number of moves and pushes taken, and the amount of time elapsed. Scoring is thus based on the relative quantity of these elements taken to complete each task.

A single wrong move can be retrieved, but should the mistake lie in an action performed previously and the situation prove hopeless, the current maze can be reset or a new one selected. A pause feature displays the present highscores and also allows the current game position to be saved. Once a level is complete, a tune plays informing you of the fact, and the next maze is loaded.

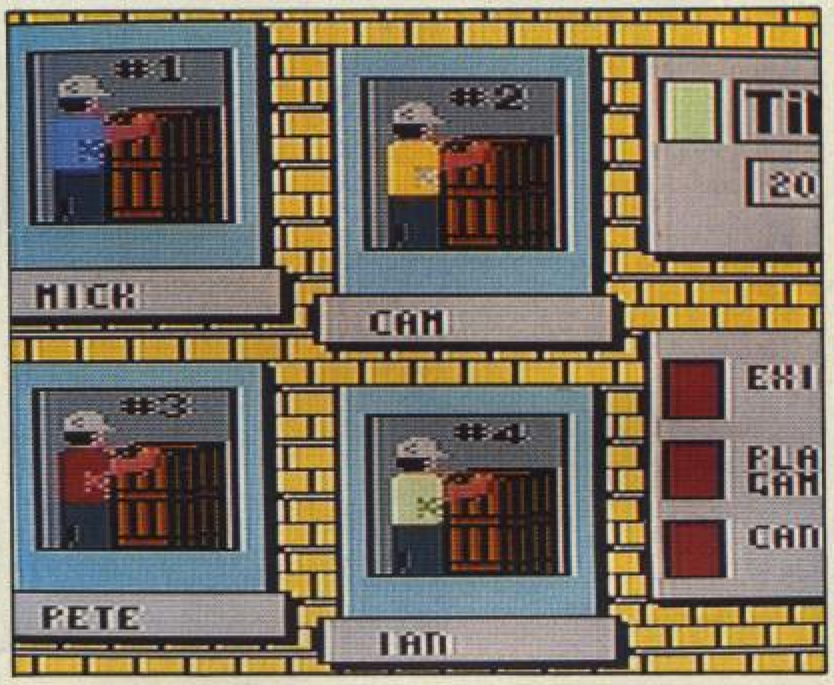
Returning to the lobby allows entry to the 'edit' elevator. Here, the player is able to design his own screens using the same features employed in the preset mazes. These are then saved to disk and played as normal.



This is one of the simplest and most addictive of the Commodore puzzle genre; it's also the hardest and most taxing! The idea is so deceptively basic that it lulls you into performing actions without thinking: as soon as concentration lapses, you make a move whose mistake doesn't become apparent until ten actions later. When you think the solution is easy, you push a box in the wrong direction and find yourself trapped! Fortunately a couple of features redeem the compelling masochism: the ability to choose any of the levels at will, and the 'undo' and save game options; but in the end success depends on an increasingly powerful ability to think strategically. Forget about the four-colour, blocky graphics and simple, clicking feet sound: the game extracts mental agility of an order which proves irresistible. The only spoiling feature is the multiload, but even this is neither excessively slow nor annoying. If you're a brain-squeezing puzzle freak with nothing to do, Soko-Ban **should keep you happy.**

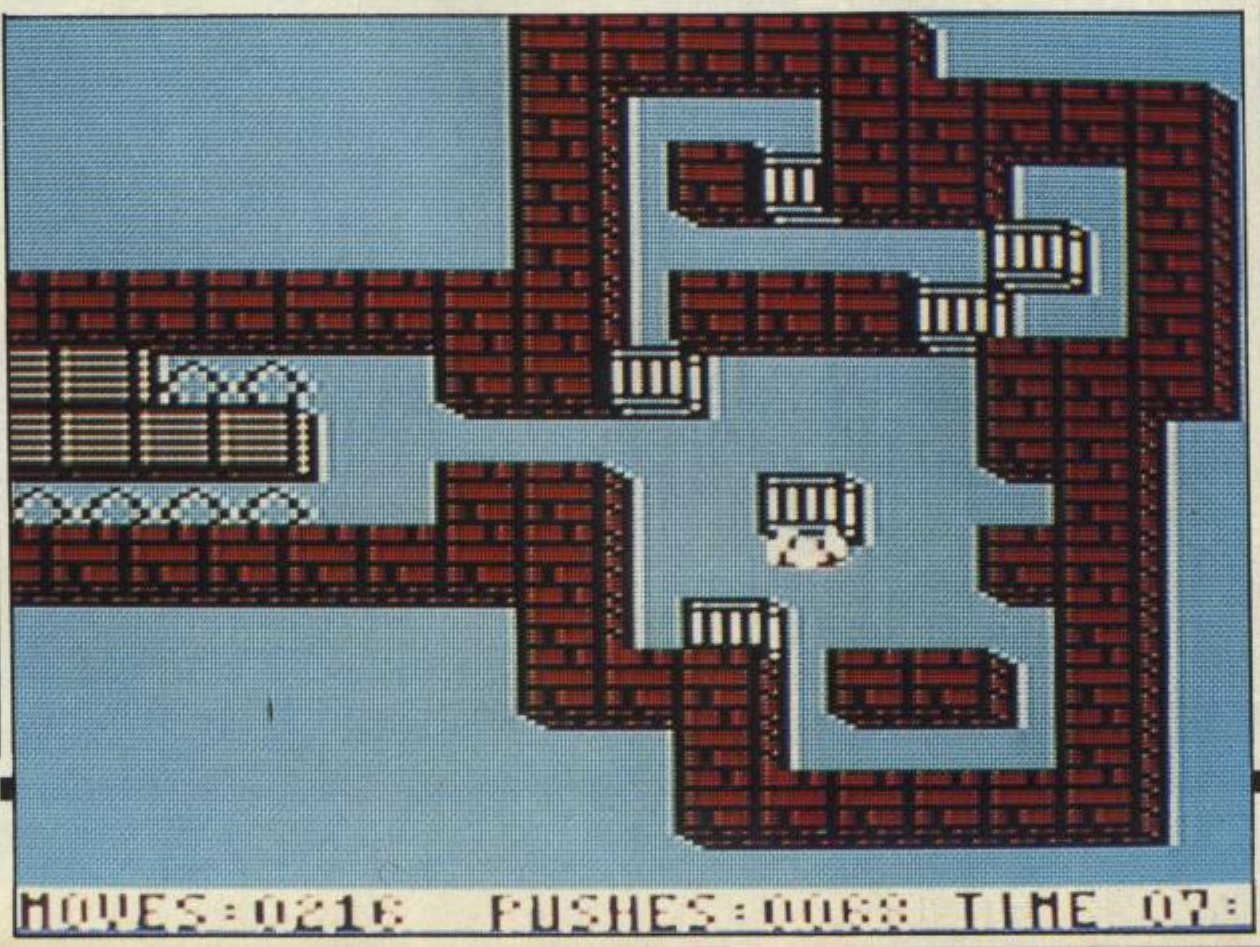


After confounding us with the infuriatingly addictive Tetris, **Mirrorsoft now provide** Soko-Ban **to complete the torture! The game looks and moves pretty awfully, but the puzzling gameplay is among the most subtly devious I've come across. Each screen appears deceptively simple, but one momentary lapse is all it takes to ensure a press of the screen reset button! The designers have done a terrific job in creating some of the sickest puzzles I've seen; play takes on a feeling of solitaire chess, where you must be able to think logically and up to five or six moves ahead. The presentation and front end is very good, being marred only by the slow disk access. There are definitely some annoying aspects about the game itself, though, such as the lack of colour and variety in the screens, the slow speed of play and the pauses during screen reset and move undo commands. However, even with these, I can still recommend** Soko-Ban **to anyone wishing to give the old logic centres a good workout!**



► The player select screen of *Soko-Ban* allows a four-player tournament to take place

► One of the 50, deceptively simple screens of *Soko-Ban*. And no, we don't know what *Soko-Ban* means . . .



PRESENTATION 87%
Good construction set, pleasant front end, and good range of options including game save. Slow and poorly structured disk access mars the effect.

GRAPHICS 30%
Blocky, but effective four-coloured backgrounds with reasonable animation on the main sprite.

SOUND 24%
Appealingly crisp tapping footsteps and an occasional ditty; otherwise silent.

HOOKABILITY 84%
It only takes one or two attempts before addiction sets in.

LASTABILITY 89%
50 levels of increasingly compelling and frustrating puzzlement.

OVERALL 81%
A superb puzzle game lacking only in polish.



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KNIGHT GAMES II

English Software, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick with keys

Having been victorious in all forms of medieval combat, a new challenge awaits the player of *Knight Games II*. Set in 3002, this sequel comprises three main stages: Combat Robot, In Orbit and The Final Tournament.

The title screen displays scores (both current and final) and the option to load any of the three levels, once the required access code is known. An options menu is available in all three games scenarios, where status bars are displayed and information on the ensuing combat can be accessed.

In 'Combat Robot', the player guides Robby the Robot across a two-way horizontally scrolling landscape, picking up friendly aliens or Robo-Knights whilst avoiding or killing hostiles in true *Dropzone* fashion.

The rescue of Robby's comrades is accomplished by hovering over them until collection is secured; returning to the launch pad sees them automatically deposited ready for the next rescuee. Contact with opposing aliens or the landscape depletes Robby's shield energy to the point of losing a life.

The 'In Orbit' section requires the player to battle alien vessels across a two-way horizontally scrolling space backdrop, while vital supplies are loaded into the mothership.

A second section sees the battle continue as viewed from the rear of the ship, and the final stage displays a 3D view of the loading bay, where aliens cross in front of Robby and are destroyed for bonuses and points.

The 'Final Tournament' comprises three contests: Jet Jousting, Light Sabres and Photon Chains. These involve either two players in combat or one player against a computer opponent, with the aim simply being to achieve as high a score as possible.

The damage system employed is the same as for *Knight Games*: contact results in the depletion of shields, as shown at the foot of the screen. When all shields are lost, the opposing player is deemed the victor.



▶ The *Dropzone*-style action screen from the first section of *knight Games II*



First impressions of Knight Games II **might well be less than favourable, considering the low standard of the opening graphics: without doubt the backdrops and sprites on the first section are dire, having bland and amateurish locations and immature sprites. Fortunately, the graphics constantly improve throughout the three sections, culminating in the very pretty scenes used in the final tournament. However, none of this disguises the fact that** Knight games II **is *extremely* unoriginal: well-worn themes are exhumed and redressed to fit the bill; it almost feels like a compilation tape. All sections are very simple, and you could well find yourself starting to yawn on only the third or fourth play. Try to see it before condemning your cash to the shopkeeper's till.**



This is really just an excuse to program two shoot 'em ups and a revamped Knight Games **format, but even so it provides a good deal of enjoyment. The three combat scenarios are varied and provide a lasting challenge – even if they are all very derivative. Graphically it's rather variable: the backdrops in the Final Tournament are very pretty and atmospheric, but in the first level they're blocky and poorly drawn. All, however, are unusual, extremely colourful and generally jolly; this is complemented by the large, bright characters which are appealingly cute and neatly animated. Presentation is well above average, with a beautiful options screen and clear display – although the instructions could have been better.** Knight Games II **is slightly more innovative than its predecessor and its diverse nature is deserving of attention.**



I wasn't at all keen on the forerunner to this game, because of its reliance on the repetitive tedium of constant joystick waggling. I was quite pleased, therefore, to sit down to Knight Games II **and get stuck into a set of pick 'n' mix shoot 'em ups, all of which are moderately playable. In fact, I was enjoying this preliminary blast so much that when I finally came to play the Knight Games proper I found them much less fun to play and probably the low point of the whole package. Graphics for the most part are less than atmospheric, tending towards silly** Jet Set Willy**-style sprites on fair-to-middling backdrops. Overall the trilogy is a rather pedestrian play but it scores well on value for money. At least there's quite a bit of variety in the package – not something I would have said of its predecessor.**



PRESENTATION 82%
Slightly sparse instructions, but good screen display and options. Multiload is rendered unobtrusive by the game structure.

GRAPHICS 58%
Range from dull and blocky to unusual and attractive. Generally colourful, however.

SOUND 54%
Standard shoot 'em up effects, a passable tune and some decent combat noises.

HOOKABILITY 70%
Easy to get into, although occasionally frustrating. Shallow gameplay fails to capture the imagination.

LASTABILITY 45%
Could rapidly prove tiresome for hardened games players.

OVERALL 61%
An interesting and colourful sequel marred by the derivative and simplistic gameplay.

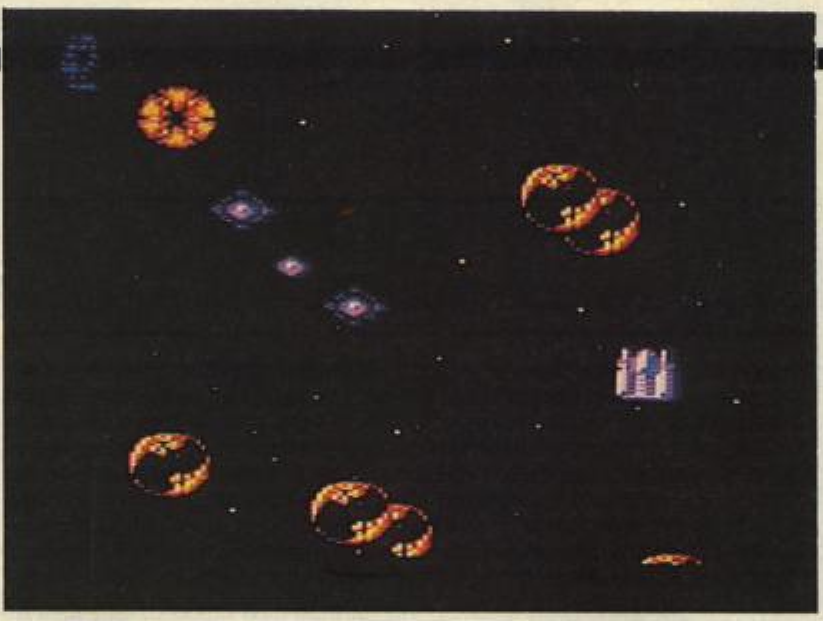
TASK III

Databyte, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

The year is 6038, and the peoples of the Cybernetica galaxy are under threat from an alien emperor. Their only hope lies in the shape of Prince Troma, who ventures into the private star system of the emperor in an attempt to seek out and destroy the malicious overlord.

Troma's task is viewed over 16 vertically scrolling stages, as the player guides his ship between the alien structures and blasts the hostiles which appear.

The player starts each game with a full complement of laser armament, and replenishes the arsenal by flying over weaponry support platforms. Each platform displays an icon relating to the item currently available, and repeatedly shooting the platform guardian which regularly appears causes the next weapon in the series of eight to become available. The equipment on offer includes extra speed, improved lasers, smart bombs and an



► A clutch of deadly aliens is released in *Task III*



What we have here is a competent shoot 'em up. The sprites and backdrops are very pretty and well animated (particularly the alien bubbles). The only fault I could find is the very high level of difficulty which is caused by the extra-rapid response of the space craft to joystick movement. On more than one occasion I was rocketed across the screen because I held the stick in position for a fraction of a second too long. Play then starts again from the beginning of the level, which is also irksome to say the least. In spite of these minor irritations, I still found myself coming back for more until it became clear that the second level was nigh on impossible to beat. If you're the sort who finds Dropzone **too easy,** Task III **should prove a worthwhile challenge. Lesser mortals may be put off by the feelings of manic frustration it tends to arouse.**



Vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups are all too common on the 64, so it requires something special for new additions to stand out. Fortunately, Task III **is one of the better efforts, with highly polished presentation from the gorgeous title screen to the innovative highscore table. Graphically it's excellent: without exception the sprites are beautifully-drawn and animated, and all contain masses of detail. The backgrounds are slightly sparse, but the rich colour scheme contributes a very slick and glossy atmosphere to the whole package. The sound also echoes this high standard: it's very sharp and compact, and the title music has its moments, too. However, the gameplay can become very frustrating, chiefly because of the excessively sensitive control method. Moving sideways is aggravated by the permanent scrolling, and things can get a little too tight when trying to shoot or avoid aliens *and* negotiate the obstacle course at the same time. Still, there's more than enough in the action stakes to make this an appealing and playable game.**

STRATTON

CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

In 2870, the fully-automated Stratton Air Terminal was constructed. Its ill-fated official opening became a disaster, however, when a bomb which had been planted aboard the visiting Imperial shuttle was detonated. The resulting explosion damaged the Central Brain, activating all the defence units and trapping the survivors within the complex.

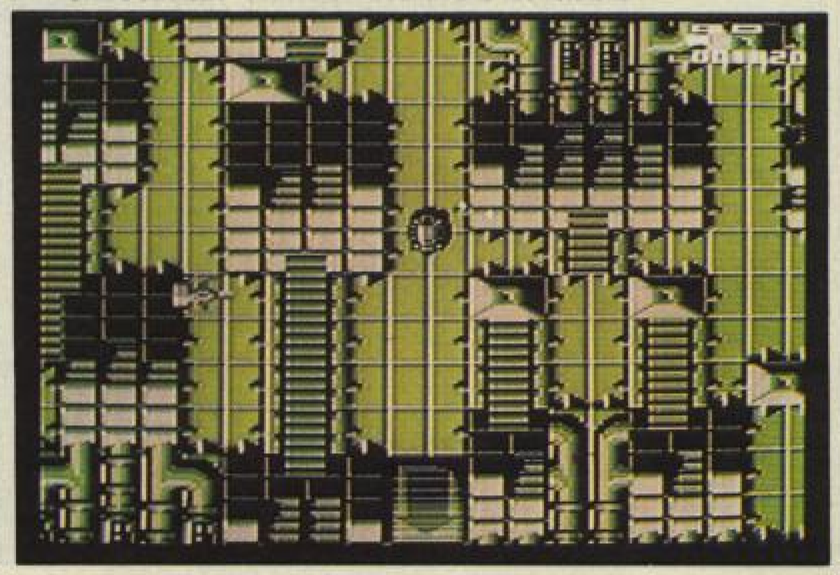
The grounded shuttle remains capable of movement, though, and it's the player's task to deactivate the defence system and escape from the terminal. This is achieved by guiding the shuttle through each labyrinthine level and blasting the many data circuit breakers that are located around the complex. These breakers appear as raised pyramidal units which, when destroyed, halt the flow of information along the main data buses. When the last breaker is removed, it triggers a shutdown of all mechanical and computerised services inside the terminal, including the malfunctioning defence systems.

The playing area is viewed from above and scrolls vertically or horizontally, dependent on the current level. Levels are accessed by marked doorways and can be re-entered at will.



The graphic detail in Stratton **is excellent: the backdrops are superbly designed and beautifully animated, creating an atmosphere of sombre industry. The use of colour and shading is brilliant, and the movement of the pistons and the opening/closing of the shutters has to be seen to be believed! Unfortunately, the gameplay fails to live up to the expectations generated by this atmosphere: it's basically just a simple maze game which involves destroying ground installations and air-attack craft. The more you progress, the more you realise that this is all there is to it: after a while it becomes extremely tedious performing the same task over and over again. The 64 version is particularly frustrating, but the 128's difficulty level has been relaxed, and some progress can be made. In either mode, however, the gameplay is equally weak: at this price it just isn't rewarding enough.**

► CRL's *Stratton* – available in both 64 and 128 versions





CRL have my admiration for attempting another 128k game, but unfortunately, C128 owners still have nothing to cheer about (and 64 owners even less so). Stratton **is awful. Yes, it looks extremely smart: the graphics are exceptional and there's plenty of detail, but the gameplay isn't just lacking – it's non-existent. Whether playing the 64 or 128 versions,** Stratton **is very tedious: you get that, 'is this all there is to it?' feeling almost immediately. This is a pity since of the last few CRL games,** Stratton **is by far the most well presented, smooth and attractive. The scrolling is good and the music is actually quite decent. Unfortunately, it's gameplay that counts – and** Stratton **is practically innumerate.**



As Databyte's first European venture (all their previous games have been US licenses), the very smart Task III **merely flatters to deceive: it's beautiful to look at, but plays like a brick. The first hurdle to any prospective pilot is the awful control method: the acceleration is too drastic and the inertia too excessive for the amount of room available – especially on the second stage, which is just silly. Precise manoeuvres are almost impossible because of the speed of the craft and the fact that it is constantly moving: sideways motion is always along a diagonal. The ridiculous accuracy and tenacity of the infernal kamikaze spaceships is also very frustrating, and the last straw for me was the annoying delay between goes while your current scoreline is calculated. This takes up at *least* 11 seconds every time you die, and even longer at the end of the game, which is infuriating. Ten quid is a rather high price just to get frustrated.**

emergency package, which contains a full set of weapons.

After a ship has been destroyed, the player's total kills are calculated and his score increases accordingly, with a bonus for weapons collected and seconds remaining on the level countdown timer.

PRESENTATION 71%
Player and joystick options and a moderately easy to use weapon-select. Annoyingly long restart sequence and a poorly contrived control method.

GRAPHICS 90%
Superb backdrops and sprites, with beautiful use of colour throughout.

SOUND 81%
Raucous blasting effects accompany strange but affable tunes.

HOOKABILITY 73%
The hectic blasting action is quite enthralling at first, but the overly difficult nature of the game soon becomes apparent.

LASTABILITY 54%
Plenty of challenge, but the high frustration level is a very effective appeal-killer.

OVERALL 77%
Slick and very polished, but some might find the action excessively hard.

In the bottom right of the display screen are two information registers: a horizontal bar displays a diminishing energy store, and separate blocks represent the number of lives remaining. Energy is depleted severely by excessive use of bullets, contact with ground or air defence systems and machinery, and by collision with enemy missiles.

The program is available in both 64k and 128k modes. 128k mode has a larger playing area to shut down, and more animated machinery within the landscape.

64K VERSION

PRESENTATION 41%
Extremely poor instructions, but a pleasant and uncluttered full-screen display.

GRAPHICS 84%
Beautiful, but repetitive backdrops and smooth scrolling.

SOUND 71%
An appropriately atmospheric title tune, but weak spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 37%
Difficult and uninspiring gameplay plus weak action combine to produce an immediate indifference to the task ahead.

LASTABILITY 24%
Plenty of locations to explore, but the similarity of landscapes and repetitive nature of the task proves unattractive.

OVERALL 36%
A graphically impressive game marred by difficult and monotonous gameplay.

128K VERSION

PRESENTATION 41%
Extremely poor instructions but a pleasant and uncluttered full-screen display.

GRAPHICS 86%
Beautiful but repetitive backdrops with a little more variety than the 64 version. Scrolling is slightly slower, however.

SOUND 71%
An appropriately atmospheric title tune, but weak spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 41%
Easier that the 64 version, which makes it a little more enjoyable.

LASTABILITY 27%
The 128 version has many more locations, but the similarity of landscapes and repetitive nature of the task negates this fact.

OVERALL 38%
A graphically impressive game marred by monotonous gameplay.

THUNDERCROSS

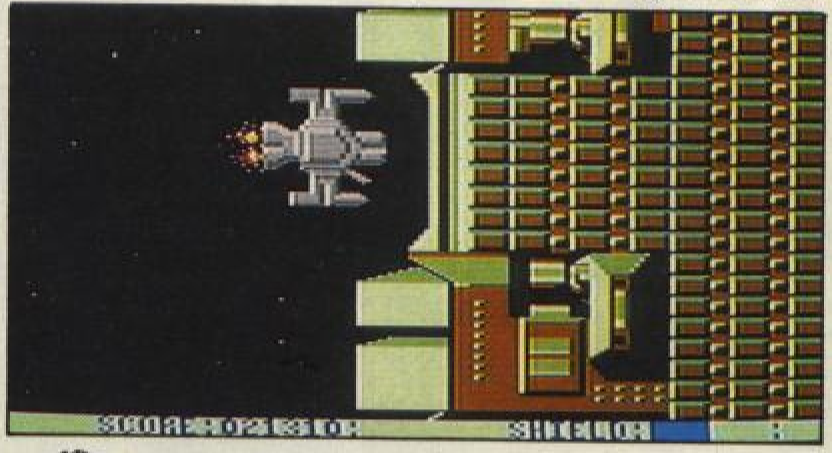
CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

The good ship Thundercross is being sucked into a vast, intergalactic Hoover. As captain of the ship, it's the player's task to guide it to safety, destroying any aliens and ground installations unfortunate enough to be in the way.

The screen scrolls horizontally from left to right, with the Thundercross able to move anywhere on the screen. When firing, however, the ship remains stationary, and joystick action releases bullets in the corresponding direction.

Opposition arrives in the form of attacking aliens, which fire missiles towards the ship, and raised sections of the vacuum, collision with which is fatal. Both aliens and ground bases are destroyed by the player's weaponry.

Firepower and shield strength decrease according to the number of enemy hits sustained, but are replenished with time. Failure to destroy enough of the Space Hoover results in death by inhalation.





This really is appalling: the wholly simplistic title screen leads you into gameplay which is unbelievably dire. The graphics are poor beyond belief, with blocky and unartistic backdrops scrolling jerkily beneath your ship. Not that your ship is any better: unimaginative, bland and clumsy, it slides sloth-like around the screen. The alien sprites are similarly pathetic: minuscule, colourless and weedy, they offer the occasional missile when they feel like it. The generally gaudy impression is relieved only by the pretty flames emanating from the ship's exhaust. Forget the rest of the presentation: the sound is pitiful and the title track instantly bland. If the gameplay were any better, it might make an average game – but it isn't and doesn't.



CRL have produced some poor games in their time but Thundercross **is definitely vying for the biscuit-taker's award. Although an interesting idea (and, admittedly, an attempt at something unusual) the control method fails utterly: the ship cannot be moved while blasting and the constant switching between manoeuvring and waggling/blasting proves really uncomfortable. This is too serious a fault for any redemption by other facets of the game, none of which are capable, anyway: the graphics are substandard fare, becoming increasingly worse as progress is made across the gaudy bas-relief Hoover sections; the scrolling is far from perfect, and the bullet/ship collision detection is biased toward the enemy. Repetitive action is the final nail in the coffin.**

PRESENTATION 21%
Simple instructions, feeble scenario, uncomfortable control method and uninspiring display.

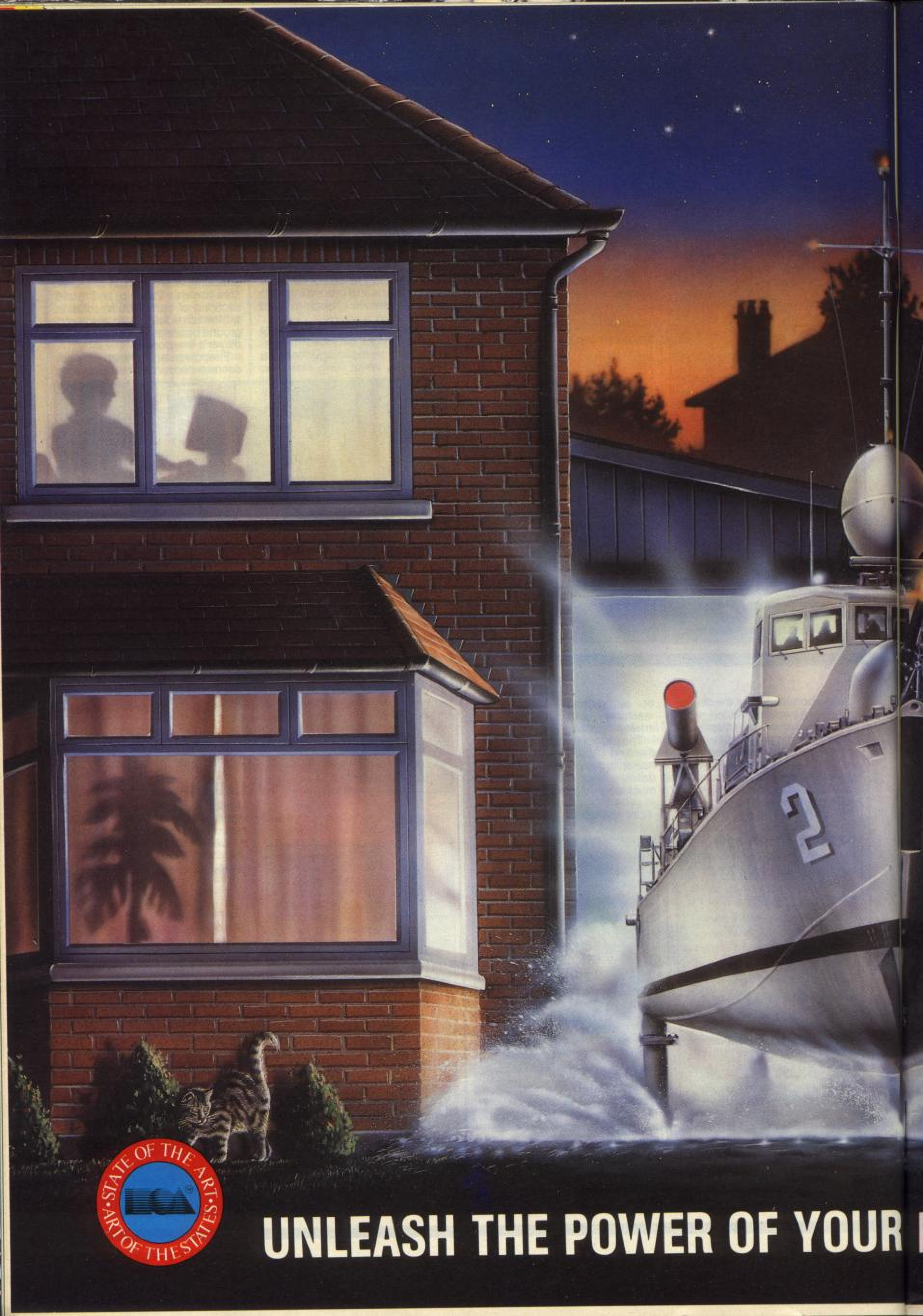
GRAPHICS 26%
Blocky, dull backdrops, unimaginative and badly detailed sprites and a poor main ship.

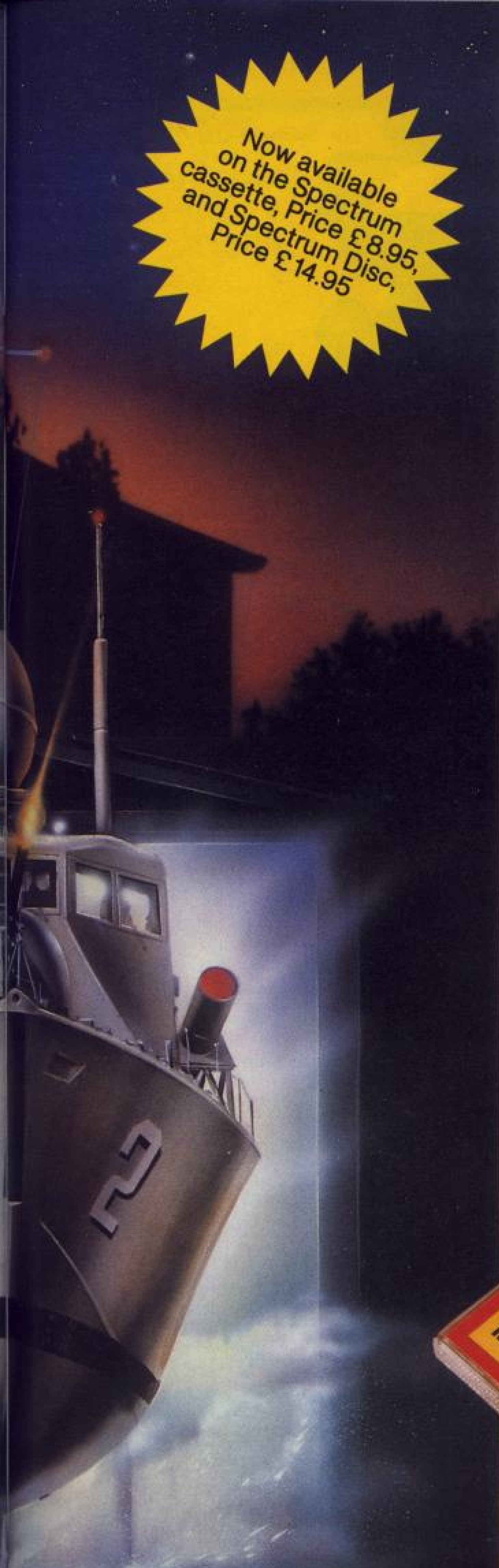
SOUND 55%
Pleasant title tune but nondescript effects.

HOOKABILITY 25%
The unattractive action and tedious gameplay repel any concentration.

LASTABILITY 11%
Nothing worthwhile to draw you back.

OVERALL 16%
An extremely substandard shoot 'em up at any price.


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IMAGINATION.

It's 7.00 in the evening. You've just finished another meal. You should do your homework but something is calling you from the garage. Something that would terrify the neighbours. Something agile, fast and deadly. **Pegasus**-the Patrol Hydrofoil Missilecraft. The temptation is just too much.



the authentic handling of NATO ally hydrofoils: US, Italian and Israeli. 76mm water cooled naval gun, Harpoon and Gabriel missiles.



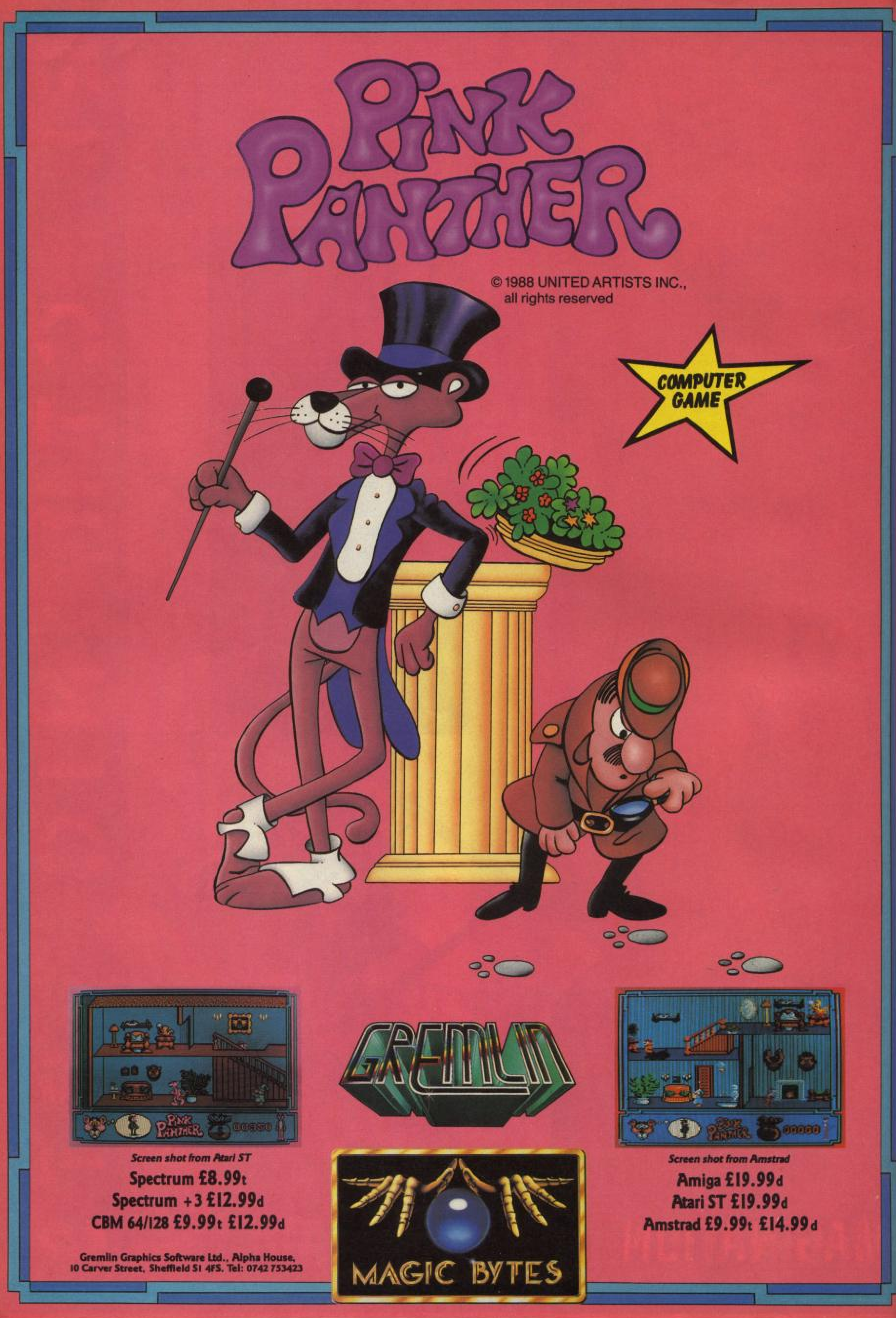
8 real life missions and on-screen maps.



Electronic Arts software is available on a wide range of home computers including: Commodore C64, Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, IBM, Spectrum and Amstrad.

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MAGIC BYTES



Yet another compressed Rrap section – mainly due to space restrictions, but helped by the rather low quality of the letters I've received of late. What's wrong, I wonder. Ah well, read on and perhaps be inspired . . .

NOT SO SERIOUS

Dear Lloyd,
After reading Raymond Devlin's letter in ZZAP! 64 issue 34, I'm quite surprised that he takes Bruce Everiss so seriously. Personally, I feel that his comments on the collapse of full-priced software, and consequently magazines like ZZAP! 64 can be dismissed as pure nonsense for the following two reasons:

One: there'll never be a total demise of full priced software, since, for a start, arcade conversions would be impossible to produce because of the price of the name, and also because there will always be a demand for real quality amongst the plethora of budget-priced 'cheap thrill' games.

Two: even if full priced games did become extinct, any magazine that was as entertaining a read as ZZAP! 64 (and CRASH and THE GAMES MACHINE) would still attract a market, and besides, people will still pay attention to reviews no matter how cheap the games are. Two pounds may not seem a lot, but it's more than a single record costs, and you wouldn't buy a record you didn't like, would you? Computer game reviews tend to be more accurate than record or film reviews because most computer game formats have 'universal' appeal – it's only the badly produced, bug-ridden programs that everybody hates, and since (unlike record and film publishers) most software publishers don't give a damn about how well programmed a game is, we will always need magazines like ZZAP! 64 to ward us off the real turkeys.

Anyway, now that I've got that out of my system, there's just one more troublesome bee under my bonnet – a bee by the name of Mel Croucher. How can he possibly have his own column, the dreadful 'Under the Baud Walk'? Not only is MC a man of limited wit, he is also a man of little imagination, since each 'episode' of UTBW is indistinguishable from another. His writing style is rather like his game designing style: oh-so-clever, but oh, so dull! Also, I've noticed that he writes the same sort of incomprehensible drivel in 'The Truth', which would be a funny magazine were it not for his intervention. Either he actually believes what he writes, or he suffers from the rare affliction characterised by falling in love with your own prose – 'Writer's Diarrhoea'. I hope this doesn't offend Mr Croucher, but I've got to say it!

Craig Machin, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire

Your views on full-price games hold some water, and I'm glad that you have confidence in the future of the market. As long as there are people out there willing to by full-priced games, they'll continue to flourish. Once again, I must say that I thoroughly enjoy Mel Croucher's subtle wit, although I can appreciate that his humour would obviously go right over the heads of those lacking a mature grip of the English language and having a completely retarded laughter gland.

LM

TOO HARD ON AUSSIES

Dear Lloyd,
G'day (If you haven't already guessed I'm an Aussie). I must say that ZZAP! 64 is the best commodore 64 mag out. The amount of games reviewed in each issue is just great (for all people who disagree, try and write, edit, publish etc your own computer magazine every month).

While I was browsing through your September issue, peacefully sipping my cappuccino in the local cafe, I came across a headline reading 'Win a Complete California Games Kit'. 'Tops,' I said to myself in excitement as I spilt my cappuccino over my white tank top, but I was too busy to think about the mess I had made. As I reached the bottom of the paragraph explaining how to enter etc. I could have shot myself. 'Entries should cruise in by September 10th'.

It's the 31st of October over here! I had only just bought your magazine from the local paper shop. 'Stupid bloody newsagents, can't even get a popular computer magazine until two months after it has been published in the UK.' As I flipped through another time, I saw another competition. 'Win your very own Bubble Bobble arcade machine'. But alas, it was due on the 10th September. Looks like no competitions to enter for me. Then I thought what if ZZAP! set up a headquarters in Australia. But that could be costly. Oh well.

Anyway, congratulations on your success in the demo tape given out in the June issue. I went down the street to get one but they had sold out. Oh well, I heard that it was good.

Recently I thought up an idea, that you could run a 64 games designing contest in which you think up a game idea (complete with title screen etc) and then send it in for some poor company to type in the winning entry. The winner wins his/her game and also some other software. Runners up win a T-Shirt (how about it?) If you do, hold it for a few months to let us down here to send in our entries.

Damien Drake, Loxton, South Australia

Australia has become an increasingly important market for ZZAP!, and that poses problems. The delay isn't your newsagent's fault, but the international distribution system is so very slow. We have wondered about arranging special Australia-only comps with houses like Ocean, and that may happen. But even as I write a deal is being sorted out with an Australian publisher to licence ZZAP! If that goes through, then you'll get your own ZZAP! somewhat faster. Let's hope . . .

LM

ZZAP! RRAP



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Dear Lloyd,
I've been a ZZAP! reader since its inception and would like to congratulate Newsfield Publications on producing a magazine with the culmination of excitement and interest, worthy of its own Gold Medal!

First of all, I would like to say how much I enjoyed the history of CRASH in your sister (if that's the current expression) mag. Will the same be done in ZZAP?

Since I'm studying in California it came to mind that your readers may be interested in what's happening to Commodore over here, and how the market compares to that in Britain. The first thing (well almost) you realise when arriving at LAX (Los Angeles Int Airport) is no ZZAP! 64 on the news stand (snivel), but fortunately I had anticipated this, and have ZZAP! sent from England.

To get to the point, I have read with interest letters on arcade conversions, pricing of software and availability of disk software.

All the software in America is on disk only, but when you compare the quality with that in Britain you realise that the majority of the good stuff is British (although there are a number of great utilities available over here). I think the most important point to raise is that people don't realise how lucky they are living in Britain, many of the so-called US Gold Games (arcade conversions) seem to be available in England before they are available here, a good example is *Gauntlet*, only recently released here.

To the people who moan about English computer mags, they should be limited to the selection over here. Great if you want to buy utilities or business software/hardware, but for games (umph!), they can best be described as being like early English computer mags – no colour.

The question of software pricing is one that has been raised several times in the last few months. I won't mention that a piece of C64 disk software costs £25 and up here, because the standard of living is higher (people get paid more). What I will say is that the software market has developed from being dominated by the 'whizz kid' programmer, to the professional team producing some very good software. Read ZZAP! and see how many quality games are produced every month. All this time and skill costs money, and to those people who buy a full-priced game every week, complaining that it lacks lasting interest for the money, I say maybe you've got too little patience to persevere and often too much of a good thing makes you expect it, and thus criticise it.

As far as arcade conversions go, as long as The Edge produce a good *Garfield* game, and Domark a good trilogy of *Star Wars* games (as they promised, but I hope they don't rush the product before it's ready) I'll be happy.

MW Kammeyer, Los Angeles

It's funny that Americans, who so love producing the very best of adventure films and TV series (and some of the very worst of the latter too), have such a serious periodical press. Most American computer mags I've seen are very dull by comparison with the British ones, both in design and content. The picture of a few years back, where British software was unrecognised in the States, is now completely reversed, with British software houses recording good sales in America.

LM

THE ARCADE EXPERIENCE



Dear Lloyd,
After hearing what Benjamin Dehhas found to do with his 64, I've decided to tell you what I did with mine the other night.

I recently got the game, *Out Run* for my Commodore and think it's very good. I told my friend about it and invited him round to show him.

We loaded it up and then started playing. Then it occurred to me, why don't I make it as realistic as possible, so I put my idea into practice.

I moved my stereo speakers to a table which I put behind the chair in front of my computer, then I brought a fairly 'low down' comfortable chair into the bedroom and put it in the place of the old chair. My friend sat on this chair and I sat behind him. I started playing the *Out Run*, audio cassette and my friend started playing the game with the stereo speakers blasting the music into his ears.

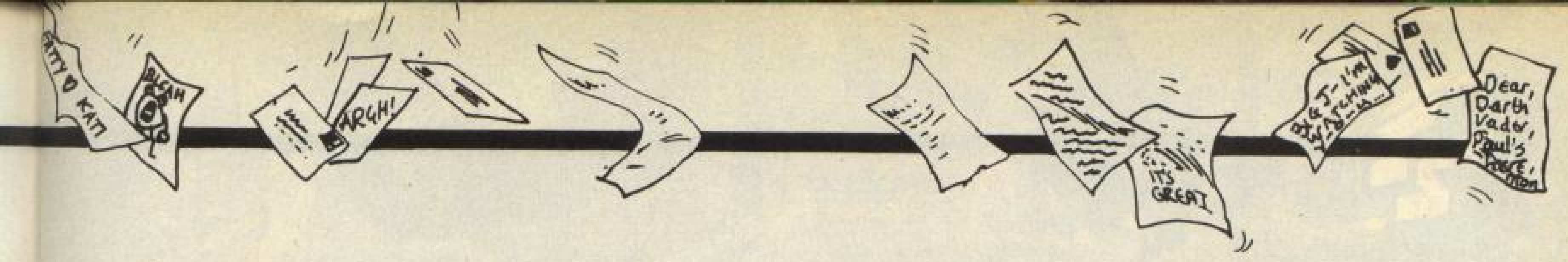
Then, when he comes to bends in the road, I tilted his chair left and right for hydraulics, and when he crashed I shook the chair vigorously. We swapped round with him doing the hydraulics and we both came to the conclusion that it makes a real difference to the game.

And if you could tell me Lloyd, how much does a real *Out Run* machine cost, with hydraulics?

Brian Wheeler, Market Harborough

What a great idea. I find that getting someone to hit me with a large brick often enhances the atmosphere when I'm playing Way of the Exploding Fist. *A real* Out Run *machine would set you back upwards of £3,000.*

LM



WHEN AND WHERE

Dear Lloyd,
Since reading your magazine, on several occasions I have found myself wanting to write to you, regarding my thoughts and views on computer software, and reviews of the same.

I bought my 64 from Boots, some three years ago, and have been enjoying its amazing unreliability ever since. In fact I have changed the machine twelve times all told, and I am currently using number thirteen.

The 64 is without doubt one of the most flexible and indeed powerful machines available today. This is why I read ZZAP! 64, however I do have some points to present to you.

The most prominent of which is the availability of software after it has been reviewed. For example: you reviewed *California Games* in the September issue, (this means you had it some time during August to review it) and I managed to procure the game on the 12th of this month (November), after learning of a release date of the 29th October. There is also the same problem with advertisements for forthcoming games. Please try to establish a possible release date, and print this within the ad or review. This would be helpful when advertising *Red October, Star Wars, Hunters Moon, Combat School, Mad Balls, Driller* and many others. I've also seen games on the shelf that have not been reviewed yet! the same delay applied to *Raging Beast* and *Arcade Classics* – they were a long time coming, but I do know that Firebird are deliberately slow in their release of software.

Something that did completely baffle me was *Blood 'n' Guts*. What happened to it and has anyone got it or even seen it? Perhaps it has been banned. I would really like to know if anyone has any information regarding this game. Also, what about *Strip Poker II* from years ago? I'd also like to say that I really enjoyed *Tubular Bells*, and thought that it was extremely unfair of you to review it as an ordinary game (as the trend is now to review some software without a percentage – *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit*).

Anyway, some praise now. A very good mag. More reviews on other software, like word processors please, does no one play bridge? I'd also like to see some stuff on Modems – when you buy one what do you do? How much do they cost and what do they offer. How about a guide to these accessories, and what about a small review on other Commodore products, like printers? Which fit in with software like word processors and even some art packages?

My last moan is about prices. What is everyone complaining about? Three years ago, I bought *Beach Head* for ten pounds, and today a tape based game still costs the same, whilst beer, cigarettes and bread have risen in price in line with what is affectionately known as inflation. I don't think we do too badly, as you have announced that disk prices are to be lowered by US Gold.

I've come to the end of my list and would like to wish everyone all the best for the future. I shall still buy this great mag and so will many others.

Thanks you listening.

Yours sincerely, S V Garratt, Manchester

Release dates are always very unreliable, so we think it best not to commit ourselves – readers would only moan when they're wrong. As for Blood 'n' Guts *and* Strip Poker II *– who knows?*

LM

So that rounds up another month. I haven't awarded a £30 software voucher, simply because I didn't think anyone deserved it. If you've got something interesting to say about life, the universe and everything, jot down your philosophy on a scrap of papyrus and send it to . . . LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. You never know, if it's interesting, you could see it in print.



CELEBRATE WITH ZZAP!

1001 PRIZES ON OFFER

IN OUR SPECIAL BIRTHDAY COMPETITION





To celebrate the 3rd birthday of the biggest-selling Commodore magazine in Britain, we've organised an astoundingly easy-peasy competition with rewards beyond the wildest dreams of even the wildest dreamers. ZZAP!'s generous streak means that we're throwing away 1001 weird, wonderful and whacky freebies to all you lucky readers. The first 1001 names to be drawn from a bulging sack with the correct answer to the unbelievably simple question below will receive any one of a magnificent multiload of pristine prizes.

Scintillating isn't the word for this breathtakingly unique selection of spoils: most people will receive a software gift, but there are also many surprise awaiting future recipients . . .

Anyway – on with the task. Question: This 3rd birthday magazine is Issue number 36. What number will appear on the cover of the **January** issue, 2001?

Got it? Put your answer on the back of a post card or sealed envelope, send it to the following address, and you could be the fortuitous winner of, well . . . something!

As if you didn't know by now, our address is: **HAPPY BIRTHDAY ZZAP! COMPETITION, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

Entries to arrive no later than April 8th or you won't get anything.



U.S. GOLD NATIONAL COMPUTER GA

Organised by Newsfield Publications Limited on behalf of US Gold, the Na

BIG PRIZES AND THE CHANCE TO COMPETE IN THE FINALS AT THE PERSO

NEWSFIELD PUBLICATIONS is proud to announce the first ever British National Computer Games Championships open to all-comers. Six regional heats with contestants competing in two categories – Spectrum and Commodore 64/128 – will be followed by two semi-finals with the qualifying contestants going forward to compete against each other on a stand built specially for the finals at the new PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW (formerly The Personal Computer World Show) at London's Earls Court. By filling out the entry form on these pages you could be among the 324 first-round contestants selected to play arcade games provided by competition sponsors US GOLD and put yourself on the road to fame and a big prize worth £1,000.

From May 14, a custom-designed travelling roadshow will take banks of Spectrum and Commodore computers to selected boys' clubs in six locations around Great Britain for the regional heats. The qualifying competitors will aim to raise the highest scores playing games specially selected from among the latest US Gold releases.

The event – the first of its kind – is being organised by Newsfield's magazines CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and THE GAMES MACHINE. US Gold, market leaders in computer software, are sponsoring the whole competition and providing all the prizes. The National Association of Boys' Clubs, with over 2,000 affiliated clubs 200,000 members throughout the UK, is helping to promote this exciting championship as well as providing venues for the regional heats and the semi-finals.

So what do you need to do to get yourself selected for the competition that could prove you to be Britain's best arcade game high-scorer? For a start off you don't have to be a Spectrum or Commodore owner, but to have a chance of qualifying you will need to be able to achieve the best possible scores on the listed games in the coupon – and remember, if you do qualify, not only you will be playing in public but also in front of the British press, so cheating now on the entry form will not stand you in good stead later!

HOW THE CHAMPIONSHIP WILL RUN

Six towns throughout the UK have been chosen for the regional heats, so there should be a venue not too far from you (see the separate list). The National Association of Boys' Clubs is already running a qualifying competition among its own membership, and they will be supplying three Spectrum and three Commodore entrants to each of the regional heats. We will be selecting a further 27 Spectrum and 27 Commodore entrants, from the forms you send in, to attend each of the regional heats. This means that in the first round a total of 360 contestants will fight to go through to the semi-finals. The five best high scorers in each format per regional heat will qualify for the semi-finals, making a total of 60 contestants. And from there, the three top scorers in each format will go through to the prestigious finals to be held at the Earls Court Personal Computer Show.

THE PRIZES

Apart from the thrill of displaying your joystick prowess to the world at large, there are some exciting prizes and mementoes to be won. Every qualified entrant will receive a specially designed certificate scroll to prove that they are at least considered among the 360 best arcade games players in the country. Special medals have been struck bearing the National Computer Games Championship logo on one side and the Boys' Club logo and year on the reverse; the 60 semi-finalists will each receive a bronze version of the medallion, while those who qualify for the finals will receive a silver medal. For the two outright winners, one on the Spectrum and one on the Commodore, there will be gold medals mounted in wooden display plaques.

US Gold are providing a mixture of hardware and software prizes for both winners to the value of £1,000, with valuable runner-up prizes for other finalists. On top of that, there will be free software and other gifts for finalists and semi-finalists and the chance to meet several famous personalities who will be attending the events. But perhaps the most thrilling aspect will be the chance to prove yourself the very best British computer games player in front of the vast audience attending the Personal Computer Show. And of course you will be featured in Newsfield's magazines as such.

COMPETITION RULES, ENTRY DETAILS AND VENUE DATES

The six regional heats, each comprising 30 Spectrum and 30 Commodore contestants drawn from the National Association of Boys' Clubs (three per machine) and from Newsfield magazines' entry forms will take place in the following towns:

May 14 - **Birmingham**
May 21 - **Gloucester**
May 28 - **Belfast**
June 4 - **Edinburgh**
June 11 - **Leeds**
June 18 - **London**

All days are Saturdays. Heats will be held in the mornings. The towns listed are correct at time of going to press, but the organisers reserve the right to make last-minute alterations. Qualifying entrants will be informed of necessary attendance details in good time.

BOYS' CLUBS

BOYS' CLUBS

AMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

ational Association of Boys' Clubs & the Personal Computer Show

NAL COMPUTER SHOW AT EARLS COURT SEPTEMBER 16-18 1988

The semi-finals will be held in Leeds on August 16, and in London on August 18; finals at the Personal Computer Show over the three public days, September 16-18.

Friends and relatives wishing to attend the first round and semi-finals will be welcome, but the NABC will be making a very modest entry charge to non-contestants. Readers wishing to attend will also be welcome – details will be published in future issues, or you can ring the organisers' office for details no sooner than one week before these dates.

If you wish to put your name forward to qualify for Britain's first National Computer Games Championship, fill out the form as soon as possible and send it to the listed address. The high scores you give will be checked by experts both at Newsfield and at US Gold. Entrants under 18 must ensure their form is countersigned by a parent or legal guardian. All qualifying entrants must be prepared to attend the venues they select on the due dates. You may select to enter at any one of the above listed venues. The organisers will accept no claims for travel or subsistence expenses for contestants in the regional heats. All contestants qualifying for the semi-finals can claim up to a maximum of £10 for travelling expenses and will receive free software from US Gold. Finalists will be given a free weekend at the Personal Computer Show in London. During contests, the decision of the appointed judges and stewards will be final and no correspondence concerning administration can be entered into.

IF YOU THINK YOU ARE BRITAIN'S BEST HIGH-SCORING COMPUTER GAMES PLAYER GET YOUR ENTRY FORM IN TODAY! CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES IS APRIL 23.

THE PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW

NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP ENTRY FORM

Please write clearly, using block capitals.

I wish to put my name forward to qualify as a competitor. If selected to compete, I agree to abide by the championship regulations.

Name ....

Address ....

....

.... Postcode ....

Telephone ....

Please tick the appropriate box:

I wish to compete on the Spectrum: ☐

I wish to compete on the Commodore: ☐

I am aged 18 or over: ☐

I am aged under 18: ☐ If you are under 18, your parent or legal guardian must sign here and print their name below:

Parent's Signature ....

Parent's Name ....

Please tick the regional heat venue you would like to attend

- ☐ Birmingham
- ☐ Gloucester
- ☐ Belfast
- ☐ Edinburgh
- ☐ Leeds
- ☐ London

In case for any reason you are asked to attend a venue other than the one you have already selected, please tick the next best alternative for you:

- ☐ Birmingham
- ☐ Gloucester
- ☐ Belfast
- ☐ Edinburgh
- ☐ Leeds
- ☐ London

In order to help us determine whether you should qualify to enter, please give your high scores on **two** of the following five US Gold Games:

OUTRUN high score is: ....

INDIANA JONES high score is: ....

720° high score is: ....

GAUNTLET II high score is: ....

RYGAR high score is: ....

And your best score on two of your favourite arcade coin-op machines:

1 Coin-op name is: .... high score is ....

2 Coin-op name is: .... high score is ....

Complete the form and send it to **THE ORGANISER, NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP, NEWSFIELD LIMITED, PO BOX 20, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.** Successful applicants will be contacted in plenty of time. Please do not ring or write to ask, it only blocks up the phone lines! And good luck!

Limited Edition

GAUNTLET™ And GAUNTLET™ II

MORE THAN 1,000 ... ... DIFFERENT SCREENS









"A first rate conversion of a first rate arcade game."
ZZAP 64 – ZZAP SIZZLER

"Great graphics, good sound, perfect playability, what more could you ask for?" C & V G HIT

"Gauntlet is definitely the most exciting coin-op conversion ever for the 64. For sheer fun and hours of entertainment value this is game the best yet."
COMMODORE USER – SCREEN STAR

"A super sequel to the much loved dungeon based shoot 'em up. As much of a blast as the first, and about twice as addictive."
YOUR SINCLAIR

"A corker, fast action and superb gameplay."
SINCLAIR USER – SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC

"The game's brilliant!"
AMSTRAD ACTION – MASTERGAME

SCREEN SHOTS FROM VARIOUS SYSTEMS



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CBM 64/128, AMSTRAD SPECTRUM 48/128K £9.99 CASSETTE

U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.
Telephone: 021 356 3388

This month the Harlequin takes a rhombus-shaped look at two budget titles from Top Ten Software, and completes his serialised solution of Kayleth (Hurrah)! Unfortunately space (or rather the lack of it) dictates that there's no Examine All or Vale of Hope this month.



WEREWOLF SIMULATOR

Top Ten Software, £1.99 cass

News hound Tommy Astle thinks he's seen everything during his vocation as a reporter with the local rag. Big City life is never dull and there seems to be nothing left that could surprise him . . . until one fateful night. People are suddenly dying in strange circumstances and there's talk of the supernatural being involved. Cynicism is the order of the day, and rumours of unearthly creatures stalking the City are brushed aside. However, as the story unfolds and Astle's investigations take him deeper in to the mysteries of the gruesome deaths, the impossible slowly becomes feasible. People speak in terrified whispers of a creature from the realms of myth and superstition, and Astle's belief in such an animal grows and grows. He has to investigate; discover the secret of the creature and reveal all to the public in the scoop of the century.

Werewolf Simulator is an adventure written using the *Graphic Adventure Creator* from Incentive Software, and as such leaves room for improvement. Location descriptions are sparse and the graphical representations are basic. However, the gameplay is of a slightly higher standard than the bulk of utility-created adventures, and a certain appeal is achieved via the ease with which initial progress is made. Inputs are either understood, as the author has included a multitude of synonyms, or rejected completely. This helps guide the player through the first few locations and puzzles until familiarity with the games style is accomplished. There are the obligatory eyebrow raisers and errors in the game; such as 'TWO ROOMS LEAD OFF NORTH AND ▶

EAST' when in fact only one room leads off in each of the two directions; one character is described as Dr Willis but may only be conversed with by inputting 'DOCTOR', and the layout of the City streets is illogical.

I didn't play *Werewolf Simulator* for very long, but I quite enjoyed the little of it I did see. It has many drawbacks having been written on the *GAC*, but, taking into account it's retail price and overall feel, it is by no means a bad adventure.

ATMOSPHERE	54%
INTERACTION	58%
CHALLENGE	57%
OVERALL	56%

SKEGPOOL ROCK

Top Ten Software, £1.99 cass

Taking the first syllable of Skegness and the last of Blackpool to create the title of this adventure was a mistake, the game would have been better described if the first of Blackpool and the last of Skegness had been used! The resulting word would have matched my inner feelings as I plodded through *Skegpool*.

The adventure is set in the distant future at a time when mankind has become totally dependent on machines (I thought you were already). One day machine decided that man was no longer a necessary ingredient in its plans and the nerve centre of the robot world – the Master Control Unit – set about reprogramming everything it controlled in an effort to destroy the human race. Luckily the Gent who created the MCU had included a failsafe device into the machine should anything ever go wrong, if the correct code can be found and input into the computer it will switch itself off. Obviously a code this powerful could not be written down for any Tom, Dick or Harlequin to find, and is therefore scattered around his home town. Unfortunately the programmer and all but one of his friends have been killed by the rampaging robots (guess who the one surviving friend is) and it's now up to you to find the code and shut down the MCU before it's too late.

Mo's Guest House is the opening scenario, with your room adorned by the obligatory bed and chest of drawers, a quick search reveals a keycard. The key to the front door is to be found under the welcome mat and soon you will be wandering around the holiday resort of Blackness . . . sorry, Skegpool. The MCU itself is located very close to the start of the game and taking too close a look at it whilst not in possession of the code results in a deceased player. An Aquarium, Park, Hotel and Amusement Arcade are all there to be explored, with objects dotted about just waiting to be picked up and utilised. Several instant deaths await the unwary adventurer so be warned, the sea is not a safe place to be and the pool in the Aquarium can end the game very quickly if you're not prepared. Many unfriendly robots patrol the area and either demand answers to their riddles to allow safe passage or they simply blast you off the face of the screen, there is no warning as to where these machines may be located (they appear at random) and they can become rather more than tedious when you have been killed for the umpteenth time. The locations (of which the game boasts 'well over a hundred') are not very well described, the usual 'YOU ARE IN . . . YOU CAN SEE' is used far too often, and brevity is obviously the style of the author. There are over forty locations within *Skegpool* which are depicted graphically, it would have better if they had not bothered with them at all – they are poorly drawn and (all together now) add nothing to the game whatsoever.

Skegpool has been written using the *GAC* and although there appears to be lots to do within the game, it is boring. The one redeeming feature is the price, which I have taken into consideration for the overall percentage.

ATMOSPHERE	47%
INTERACTION	42%
CHALLENGE	54%
OVERALL	49%

KAYLETH

US GOLD/ADVENTURESOFT

SERIALISED SOLUTION NUMBER ONE (PART SIX)

Last month I left you in the mind facsimile section where you had (hopefully) just been reinstated with your Zyronean body. Go to the elevator and press G, get the ball, go back into the lift and ascend to level M1. After leaving the elevator go down to the Azap chamber and enter the code EPO, going south results in you being sucked into a green spiral tunnel. Go down twice and put the ball in the hole. You awake in a void face to face with the Asterion Technician. Examine him and he informs you that now the ball is in place you can finish your task of repopulating the devastated planet of Zyron. He continues by telling you that you must poison Kayleth's life blood with the essence of Tae – find the bulb and nurture it! Magically you find yourself transported to a clearing. Take the bulb, go north and down and enter Azap code ELY. Go up and enter the elevator, press G and go south, south and east to where you left the mortar and bottle. Take the compost and bottle and pour the water on the compost then plant the bulb in it, now wait eleven or twelve turns until the Tae flower bursts open. Take the mortar and put the seeds inside it to gain 'KAYLETH'S DEATH WARRANT'. Drop the mortar and the bottle and go back to the elevator, press M1. Head for the nearest Azap chamber and input the code DHT. Go up and type Help, you are told to read back all the Azap Codes; ROO, DHT, ELY, AKN, and EPO. Read them backwards to reveal the message 'OPEN KAYLETH DOOR'. Do this and you will arrive in Kayleth's inner sanctum (exciting isn't it?), drop the essence in the pool and you receive the message; 'THE MAXIMA POOL TURNS RED, KAYLETH'S FORM BEGINS TO SWELL. KAYLETH BURSTS! HIS REIGN IS OVER. YOUR'S HAS JUST BEGUN, YUREK THE GREAT! WELL DONE!'

Easy once you know how! Look out next month for the first part of my second serialised solution, you'll have to wait to discover which classic adventure it will be.

Cl
Co

The normally ever-growing list of Clever Contacts has unfortunately shrunk this month, possibly due to it's overuse. Hopefully next month, after a short rest, it'll revert back to its more usual ginormous size.

Adventureland, Adventure Quest, Arrow of Death I, II, Ballyhoo, Blade of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire of Karn, Enchanter, Erik the Viking, Escape from Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest at the Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds in Space, Hampstead, Heroes of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Ring of Power, Robin of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels of Babylon, The Journey, Never Ending Story, Pawn, Time

ever
ntacts

Machine, Wizard and Princess, Quest of Merravid, Tower of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, Witches Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzz . . .
Bob Shepherd, 106, Highfield Street, Coalville, Leicestershire.

Heroes of Karn, Bored of the Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsy's Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy Grail, The Pawn, Return to Oz, Masters of the Universe, Robin of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magik.
Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France.

Tower of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka.
John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69
Tel: 041 771 7729

Mordons Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson
Tel: 01 360 8325

Zork I, II & III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, Hitchikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, SubSunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla.
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia.

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings.
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH. Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only).
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY. Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN

Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand. Tel: 867074

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula.
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland. Tel: 036565 594

Upper Gumtree, Bugsy Malone, Never Ending Story.
Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Elmtree Farm, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland TS19 0TJ. Tel: 0642 587789 (between 4pm and 10pm)

The Hobbit, Erik the Viking, Castle of Terror, Eureka, Voodoo Castle, The Count, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Zork I, Zork III, Exodus, Ultima III, The Boggit, Lords of Time, Never ending story, The Hulk, Temple of Terror, Ultima IV, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Valkyrie 17, Sherlock, The Fourth Protocol, The Helm, Wizard of Akyrz, Perseus and Andromeda, Lord of the rings (part 1), Emerald Isle, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hacker, Colossal Cave.
Steven Kelly, 4 South View, Whins Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, Lancs BB12 7QU. Tel: 0282 74765 (between 6pm and 10 pm)

The Hobbit, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Zzzz, Spytrek, Robo City, Imagination, Demon Knight, Koboyashu Naru, Tower of Despair, Time Tunnel, Citadel of Chaos, Eureka, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle.
Paul Hardy, 33 Fir Tree drive, Wales, Sheffield S31 8LZ.

Hitchikers Guide, Zork I, Zork II, Planetfall, Leather Goddesses, Cutthroats, Infidel, Stationfall.
Dave Rogers, 15 Elm Terrace, Westfield, Radstock, Bath, Avon BA3 3XP.

Amazon, Borrowed Time, Castle of Terror, Castle Adventure, Computer Adventure, Dracula part 1, Grand Larceny, Haunted House, Himalayan Adventure, Labyrinth, Mad Mummy, Mindshadow, Murder on the Waterfront, Never ending story, Ninja, Raka-tua Volcano, Scroll of Akhbar, Seabase Delta, Silver Mountain, Subsunk, The Boggit, The Dallas quest, The Hobbit, Ultima IV, Voodoo Castle, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Zzzz.
Mario Moeller, 38 Greenvale Drive, Greenvale, 3047, Vic. Australia.

Ultima IV, The Bard's Tale, Voodoo Castle, Phantasie I, Never Ending Story, Dracula, The Prince of Magic, Borrowed Time, The Pawn, Seabase Delta, Deadline, Zork III, Wishbringer.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 8EB.

Hitchikers Guide, The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings, The Shadows of Mordor.
Warren Lee Melia, 1 Thornhill Avenue, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 4EZ.

Castle of Terror, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Mindshadow, Holy Grail, Redhawk, Snowball, Subsunk, Twin Kingdom Valley, Voodoo Castle.
Jeff Gillan, 50 Tynedale Crescent, Penshaw, Houghton–Le–Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7RP.

Starcross, Suspended, Suspect, Leather Goddesses, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Deadline, Planetfall, Infidel, Cutthroats, Ballyhoo, Lurking Horror, Seastalker, Bureaucracy, Trinity, Moonmist, Hollywood Hijinx, Hitchikers Guide, Wishbringer, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Enchanter, The Pawn, Ultima I, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Sherlock, Gremlins, The Hulk, Terrormolinos, The Fourth Protocol, The Hobbit.
Billy Kavanagh, 49 Drake Hall, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 2RA.

Never Ending Story, Zzzz, Quest for Holy Grail.
Tony Kinnear, 49 Wainwright Avenue, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 2SZ.

Imagination, Never Ending Story, Terrormolinos, Twin Kingdom Valley, Bugsy Malone, Hampstead, Robin of Sherwood, Zzzz, Quest of Merridavid, Upper Gumtree.
Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Elm Tree farm, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS19 OTJ. Tel: 0642 587789.

Bally Hoo, Bored of the Rings, Borrowed Time, Deadline, Emerald Isle, Enchanter, Eureka (German, Arthurian, Roman), Gremlins, Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy, The Hobbit, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Mind Shadow, Munroe Manor, Moonmist, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Planet of Death, Knight Orc Pt 1, Seastalker, Ship of Doom, Spell Breaker, Spiderman, Starcross, Stationfall, Tass Times, Lurking Horror, Tracer Sanction, Valkyrie 17, Very big cave adventure, Wishbringer, Worm in Paradise, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III.
Ian Gay, 18 Earsdon Close, Westdenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 2RL.

Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Trinity, Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Knight Orc, Jinxter, Moonmist, Hollywood Hijinx, Cutthroats, Bureaucracy, Wishbringer, Red Moon, Worm in Paradise, Snowball, Return to Eden, Price of Magic, Macbeth Pts I, II, III, Kings Quest II, Adventure Quest, Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Fourth Protocol, Lord of the Rings.
Bruce Marshall, 3 Mersyside Avenue, Corfeton, Cheshire, CW12 4J2. Tel 0260 279786.



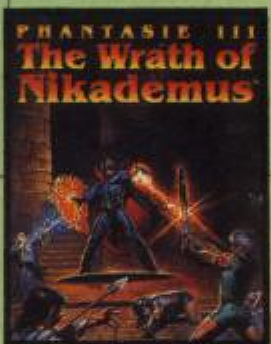
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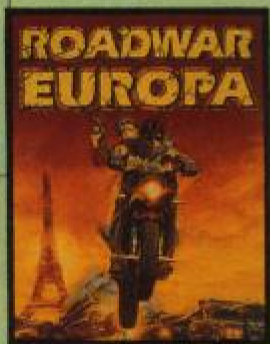
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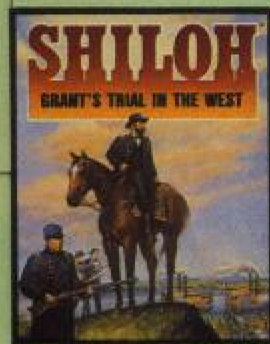
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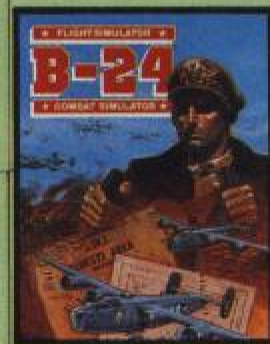
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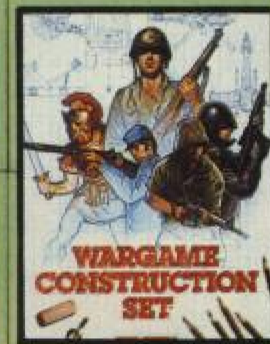
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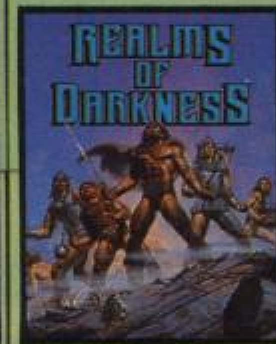
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MANOEUVRES

With Philippa Irving



FOR REAL?

This month has been the first in which no new strategy or wargames have found their way to me. I hope that this is just a post-Christmas thinning out, and that the forthcoming year will bring a variety of new and interesting releases for computer owners who prefer to do something other than blast things with their joysticks.

Perhaps some people see wargames as blasting things in slow motion. The moral problem which the very concept of making a game out of something which involves killing large numbers of people seems to pose arises from the confusion between game and simulation. Because of the limitations of what can be put into a computer in the first place, no matter how much memory is available, simulations must always have elements of gameplay. Sometimes computer wargames are slanted so heavily towards that gameplay end of the scale that all simulation is lost sight of, and quite often the result is a slight enough game anyway.

Simulation is always a game anyway, when it's carried out by people for the enjoyment of it; simulations of car crashes by seat belt manufacturers and simulations of crimes by the police wishing to reconstruct an incident are neither pleasant nor done for fun, but are intended to provide information of some sort. The kind of things that people simulate for the sake of doing it vary more than you might imagine – when you think about it, the amateur actor playing Hamlet is simulating a prince whose father has been murdered by his uncle – but it's usually something that they would find interesting to do in real life, whether it would be pleasant or enjoyable or not. They hope to recreate something of the real experience, without any disagreeable or dangerous elements. The undergraduate actor playing Hamlet may perform for the enjoyment of playing to an audience, but he may also be trying to recreate all the emotions of passionate revenge and indecision which he would hope never to have to feel himself. The player with a flight simulator attempts to get some of the tension and joy of flying and crashing without the danger that would come with the real experience, which he may not even have any desire to attempt. And the same principle applies, of course, to the wargamer.

The most completely non-abstract wargamer has to be the live battle re-enactor, who goes to the trouble of dressing up, equipping himself with weapons, encountering the 'enemy' in the flesh and even interacting within a society of other people acting out the same simulation as he is. This is too time and resource-consuming to be done often, even by the enthusiast. In most instances simulations start on the table-top, and this is where abstraction must begin as well. Those gamers who re-enact battles with lead figures follow statistical rules for movement and combat, but the rules are still very much a means to the end of recreating a historical event.

When we get to board games which use counters, typically to represent larger units than figures, the rules start to take over. There is no way that a square cardboard figure with something that looks like a sealed envelope and a figure 2 printed on it can be visually equated to 2000 infantry soldiers of the last 1st Panzer Division. With gleaming rows of beautifully-painted miniatures, a degree of literalness can be retained. But with board-based games, the player needs nets of elaborate rules to enclose the fluid reality of the distant campaign. Exactly the same thing happens in role-playing combat systems which make some attempt to be realistic. Mud, despair, camp conditions and the charisma of a leader are all equated with numbers, and added together in various formulae to attempt to produce an approximation of the original results.

Although it's fairly obvious that these approximations must in the end bear no approximation to reality, the illusion of simulating reality still motivates the board wargamer. They will happily take a whole afternoon to go through one turn, delighting in the complexity of the rules.

The way in which this differs from what is demanded of necessity by a computer game I will have to look at in detail next month, for I seem to have run out of space. ▶

THE ETERNAL DAGGER

SSI/US Gold, £19.99 disk



This is the first review in a series in which I'll take a look at some past releases which I haven't had the chance to review in Manoeuvres. SSI have a huge back catalogue of games which are readily available – by mail order, at least, and probably through friendly software shops – only a fraction of which has ever been covered in ZZAP! Having finally got hold of some of them, and having no new releases to review this month, I've decided to start with one of SSI's fantasy strategy roleplaying games, *The Eternal Dagger*.

This, apparently, is the sequel to *The Wizard's Crown*, a game which I have not seen. It is, however, entirely self-contained – you can use characters saved from a previous game of *Wizard's Crown*, although you have to leave behind all their goodies, but the story bears only a tacked-on relation to its prequel and there are full character generation facilities.

The player controls a party of adventurers who are native to the land of Arghan, which he had the task of saving in the previous game. It comes as no great surprise to the seasoned hero to learn that it is in desperate danger yet again, under attack by hoardes of screaming undead nasties flowing in from the Dungeon Dimension. The source of these undesirables was unknown to the Wizard's Fellowship until its leader made contact with a wizard, Ssur, in the Middle World. The Middle World is not geographically separate from Arghan; rather, it appears to be in a slightly different dimension, and travel there requires adventurers to pass through a 'gate', leaving behind all weapons and armour and magic items. Ssur is the last surviving wizard in the Middle World. The others have all been defeated by the Big Bad Evil Necromancer, who is leading an invasion of unpleasant forces; using the Middle World as a beach-head, he is planning to move into Arghan. The battle for the Middle World has not quite been lost as yet – Ssur and a few rebels still hold out – but once it has, there is no hope for Arghan. Until the next game. The response of the Arghan Wizard's Fellowship is the obvious one. Send a few decent skull-splitting chaps into the Middle World, to wander about the landscape in a party killing monsters, looting their treasure, finding magic items in dungeons . . .

Attentive readers might well conclude that this sounds very much like *Shard of Spring*, and indeed every other computer roleplaying game they have ever encountered. And so it is, unashamedly. It does not have a readily apparent quest object, although I suspect that one might be discovered in the course of adventuring; the general idea is merely to bump off a few of the nasties, and delay the wholesale invasion of Arghan while the Wizard's Fellowship builds up its forces. I note with interest that the SSI catalogue describes *Shard of Spring* as 'introductory' and *The Eternal Dagger* as 'intermediate'. This seems reasonable, for the game system of *The Eternal Dagger*, although it bears a generic resemblance to that of *Shard of Spring*, is quite a bit more complex. There's more of everything; more weapons, more armour, more combat damage rules, more character types and more skills.

Unless you want to use the thoughtfully-provided pre-generated party, creating a set of characters is the next stage. The party can contain up to eight, and as usual there is little advantage in going out with less than the maximum number. The player has complete control over the creation of a character, there being no random element involved. Each has a fairly standard set of characteristics – intelligence, strength, dexterity and hit points – which are bought up to any level the player desires from a pool of 58 points. Intelligence is determined not by point expenditure but by the choice of profession, and professions must be bought with points from the pool. It costs 14 points to become a sorcerer, 2 to become a ranger and intelligence – roughly related to the cost – the professions allow a basic, automatic aptitude in the range of skills associated with them. It is possible for characters to have more than one profession – there's nothing to stop them having all five – and it is expected that many will, for the skills associated with being a thief are essential, but a character who was nothing but a thief would be very little use for anything other than picking locks.

As a final touch, the player can choose a figure to represent each character from a bank of about thirty in slightly different poses, wielding different weapons. This reminded me of choosing lead figures in live roleplaying, and making desperate efforts of imagination to convince each other that a nicely-painted half orc really did look a bit like a female magic user.

This character generation sequence is very scientific, slightly confusing, and seems to me to lack excitement. In a strange way it's too generous, and through its desire to allow for the sophistication of multi-profession characters it loses their individuality. Although blindly rolling for characteristics is an old-fashioned way of doing things, most modern live roleplaying systems retain a prominent random element. Being in total control of the composition of the character's abilities may seem sensible, but there's something missing.

The characters start off in Ssur's tower, where the gate between Arghan and the Middle World operates. There they are equipped with their main weapon and – generously – the best kind of armour that they can wear. After choosing one of the party to be a 'pointman', they can set off into the hostile environment of Ssur's island. It has been overrun by the Necromancer, who himself is hiding on a small island off the northwest coast, and so is teeming with undead creatures. The booklet of hints and strategies goes into detail about the environs, and points the way to the first scenario. A large dragon roaming about part of the island was responsible for stealing Ssur's secret weapon, the Holy Morning Star, which ensured that the Necromancer was able to overpower him. A brand of rebels hiding in the north have a special dragon-slaying sword, and if the party can make contact with them they might be able to recover the Holy Morning Star from the dragon's lair.

A symbolic representation of the party moves about a landscape of hills, grass, swamp and plains, while time passes only with each player move. This aspect of the game is similar to *Shard of Spring*. Surprise random encounters happen too with wearisome regularity. But there is a remedy for this; instead of being forced to act out every encounter in detail, you can choose between 'quick' and 'tactical' combat. Quick combat resolves the battle immediately, without going into any details, and is only to be used when you're certain that your party can walk over the opposition. It gives the opposition a much better chance of winning. Tactical combat plays everything out in detail. However, unless the party is ambushed you do usually have the option to attempt to establish friendly relations with any group encountered. Often it's essential to talk rather than fight.

Tactical combat is complex and involved, without really being involving. Each character has a wide variety of possible moves to make in his action phase; as well as the obvious option of attacking a nearby enemy, he can do things like 'sneak' – try to hide from the enemy – and 'stand on guard'. Some can be combined with physical movement, but others take up the whole action phase. Naturally, magic users have access to a battery of offensive magic, and the kind of tasks that can be performed in battle by sorcerers vary from straightforward fireballing to turning the whole party invisible. Priests can pray, too, to effect instant healing.

When a character is hit, a description of the wound, its location of the body, and its effect is flashed onto the screen. A distinction is made between injury and bleeding, and characters can die from blood loss with alarming rapidity. It is not easy to tell what state the opponents are in.

It was my experience that – even playing on the easiest level, and there are five – as soon as my party set foot beyond Ssur's tower they were met by large hordes of monsters who just outclassed them and certainly outnumbered them. The tactical combat is slow – it doesn't have the satisfying simplistic smoothness of the routine in *Shard of Spring* – and the sheer number of enemies in the wilderness encounters make it seem interminable.

When at long last the opponents have been defeated, the party can stuff their weapons and possessions into their backpacks and when they get to a town can sell them to make the necessary money to buy enchanted weapons and armour.

There is a lot of depth in this game, a lot of detail, and a lot of imaginatively-conceived islands to map. But it's something that you will have to approach in a serious and business-like frame of mind, armed with mapping paper and a notepad and a free stretch of about eight hours. If you like computer roleplaying games this will give you something solid to get your teeth into, but if you want a gentler introduction I would recommend you try *Shard of Spring* first.

PRESENTATION 70%
Control is entirely via the keyboard, with no joystick option, movement is awkward.

GRAPHICS 61%
Not very inspiring, and it's sometimes difficult to tell what's what.

RULES 90%
Well laid out and detailed, giving charts for all statistical rules, and a background book provide atmosphere.

PLAYABILITY 72%
Tactical combat is drawn-out and occurs too often in the wilderness, but the storyline has its own pull.

OVERALL 86%
A solid and complex game example of this specialised genre, which certainly has a lot of play in it.

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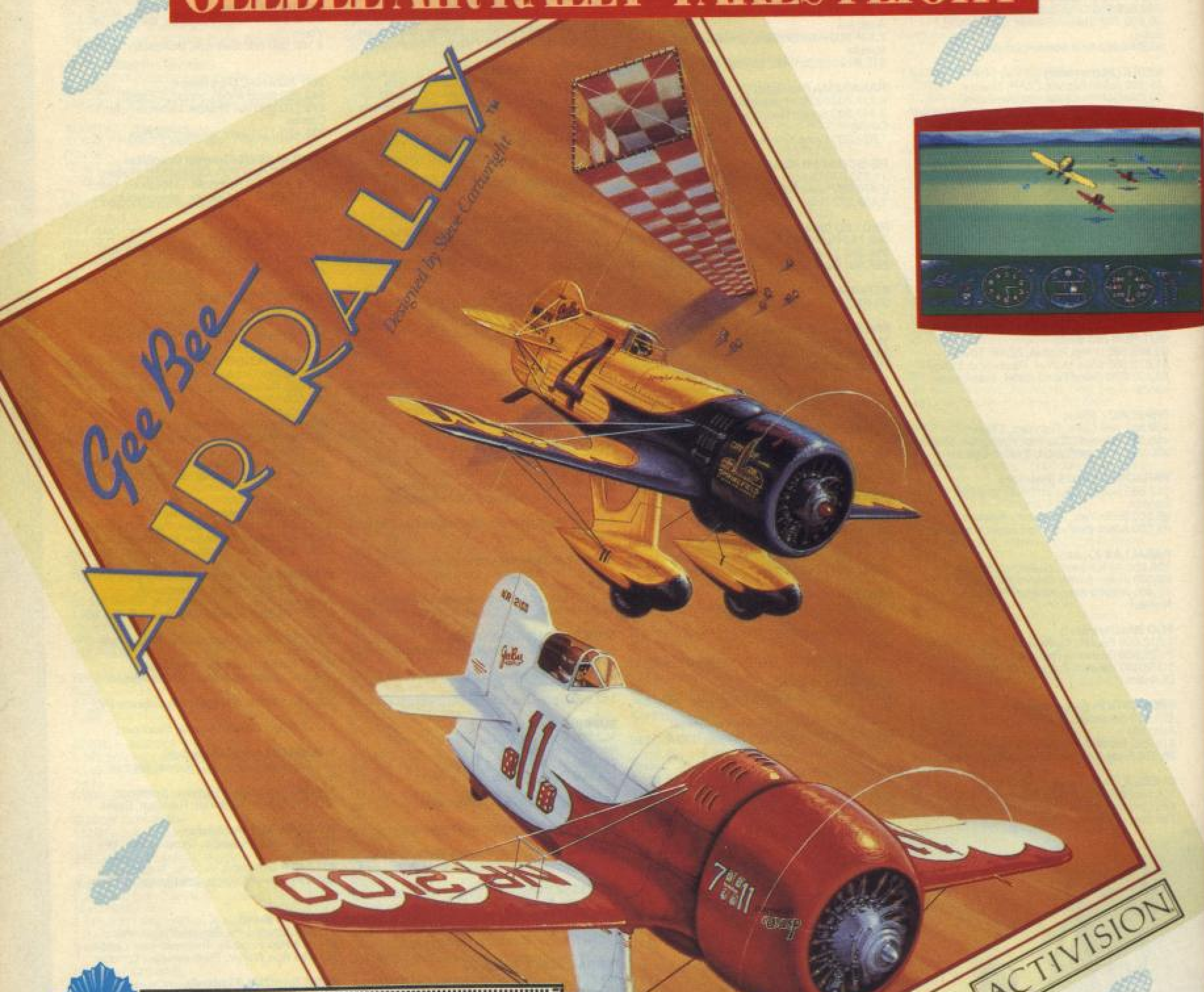
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"

I bid you welcome, my loyal and humble fans! I've cut short my stay at the Ursa Minor Psychiatric Hospital, and return at last to bring you the challenge! There have been some changes since I've been gone, and there are three new acne-ridden faces to haunt me – the squat, toad-like Paul Glancey, who rides Mekon-like on a cloud of smugness; oafish Gordon Houghton, whose lumbering weight is only matched by his ego, and Steve Jarratt, the lover of only two things: his new, Black XR2 and himself. And of course, there's the foulest of them all – the wretched Rignall, he of oversized mouth and ego. Over the coming months I'll be picking the most elite of my highscoring heroes to do battle with these flaccid fools, and I want to see them beaten. Be warned, I only want the most strong-of-heart to apply for this ultimate contest – failure will be met with my wrath, and the derision of the entire ZZAP! team. If you think you are made of the right stuff, fill out the form below and post it to

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SCORE ....

LEVEL REACHED ....

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WALKER'S ◂W▸A◂Y▸

By Martin Walker

Flushed with the success of *Hunter's Moon*, Martin Walker has launched into his latest 64 project. Over the next few months, he'll be revealing all the trials and tribulations of creative programming in this, his diary . . .

Sunday 24th January 1988

The first major breakthrough. My projects always seem to start with the main character of the 'story', unlike Andrew Braybrook's, whose first step always seems to be the background character set. I find that if there's a hero to work with, more things suggest themselves. Anyway, less of this waffle, let's hear about the breakthrough!

Well, I've designed a new craft that looks almost as if it escaped from an Atari ST. Using only two sprites (the Hunter of *Hunter's Moon* fame used four hi-res sprites superimposed) I've managed to get a four colour craft that looks as if it has been designed in 320x200 mode. Most of the realism comes from all the time I put in on Hunter's playing with the light. No, not swinging from the ceiling, but gently playing across the harsh metallic hull of the Hunter, as she swung to meet the renewed onslaught from the crystalline forces. With lasers hurling twin blinding beams of destruction through the starkness of space, spinning showers of debris spun out into the void . . . Now, where was I?

Monday 25th January

Must make a note not to get carried away today, otherwise I will get carried away forcibly, kicking and screaming! You've probably already noticed that Sunday still counts as a working day in my book, but my weekends tend to be in convenient gaps towards the middle of the week – you can't take a day off if there's an idea struggling to get out, can you?

Back to the light and shade. If you look at the majority of games that used highlights and shadows to add depth and realism, they all tend to place the imagined light source at top left. The, highlights are all top left on each object, and the darkest parts are bottom right. It was a long time before I realised why, but Hunter's Moon is lit from the top right. Hmmm! The answer is that I'm left handed! If you are right handed, to draw easily you normally position the light at the top left to avoid shadows of your arm falling across the picture. Subconsciously I always place the 'sun' at the other side for the same reason! Pretty heavy huh?

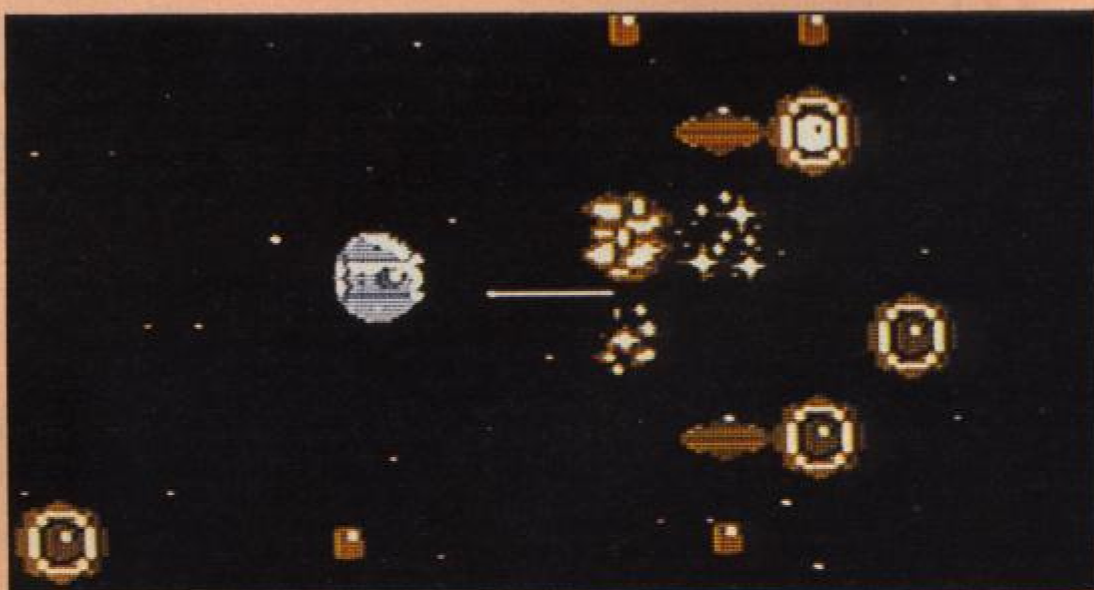
Wednesday January 27th

Hmmm! What to write about today? Got up. Went shopping. Re-read the current issue of ZZAP! I know it must be a Walker 'weekend'. What can I reveal to the world (at least a select selection of ZZAP! readers) that would grab them before they skip ahead to infinitely poke their way into another Galactic Mega-Score table? What is it anyway that drags us back to a game even when we've got infinite lives and can start at any level? Is it the atmosphere generated in *Paradroid*, the feeling after completing a wave of licker ships in *Iridis Alpha*, or the swirling beauty of the alien formations in *Delta*? Can I think of any more sentences to end with a question mark?

Some games seem to always merit 'just one more blast' before the 64 has its juice cut. I'm pleased with the way Hunter's turned out in this respect – I still enjoy playing it after sitting in front of it for nearly 8 months. I suspect it's something to do with getting the difficulty set right. Some games feel as if nobody ever wanted you to get very far! I set my games to be tricky for me. This should mean that kingzappers find it a challenge and the rest of us can still get there. My best so far at *Hunter's Moon* is system 14.

It's always tricky to set the difficulty of any game after a few months of your own playtesting. You're an experienced player (and often the only one at first), and there's nothing worse than a starting level that seems too difficult for a beginner, or too easy for that matter. Ideally it must be tried out on unsuspecting friends and colleagues – here, grab a joystick and give me a gut reaction. It could be messy, couldn't it?

Everyone likes different sorts of control – that's why there are three engines to choose from in Hunter's. Take your bog standard progressive shoot 'em up. You start like a snail and always have to get through at least two screens worth of mayhem before collecting enough tokens to get what in any 'normal' game is standard equipment! I like the approach of *Delta* – at least when you've got it you keep it for a bit, or in *Morpheus* where there's a real feeling of having earned your new bolt-on goodie (even if it gets blown off 10 seconds later).



Thursday 28th January

Spent some time thinking about a new control method for the next game. Scribble. Eight way scrolling again, I think. Although it commits me to animating my craft through 16 directions as it rotates, it seems worth it. I've already done a flick screen and parallax horizontal scroller now, but prefer the freedom of being able to go anywhere at all (backgrounds permitting). Scribbled furiously for some time – all these pieces of paper will be condensed later to become the 'New Gameplan'!

Friday 29th January

Though it might be a useful chance in this diary to publish a complete star system guide to *Hunter's Moon* for all those players who might find it helpful. A couple of exclusive tips for ZZAP readers – to start the game at any one of the first four systems, simply hold down keys 1, 2, 3, or 4 as you press the fire button to begin. And for all those who need a little encouragement – there's a graphic sequence at the end of the game for anyone who gets as far as the Ludo system (starmap 11) or further before running out of craft. 'The Hunter returns to Hunter's Moon' after the high score table disappears.

Saturday 30th January

Went into town today. Thought it would be interesting to see what was on the software shelves of the high street shops. Boots as always had a good selection and seem to get most things fairly quickly once released. They also have a nice clearout occasionally and a few bargains. Not today I fear. I think one software house must have overdone the hype, as the bargains seemed to be composed mostly of one huge heap of the same game reduced to £2.99. Whoops!

WH Smith seem to have their software delivered by the local museum. I spotted titles that have since become collectors items sitting on the shelves next to the 'Top 20 Chart Games'. It's great for a quick delve and reminisce. You can spot the trends in cassette covers, and even find the full price games next to their budget reincarnations. Not much of a contest, really, is it?

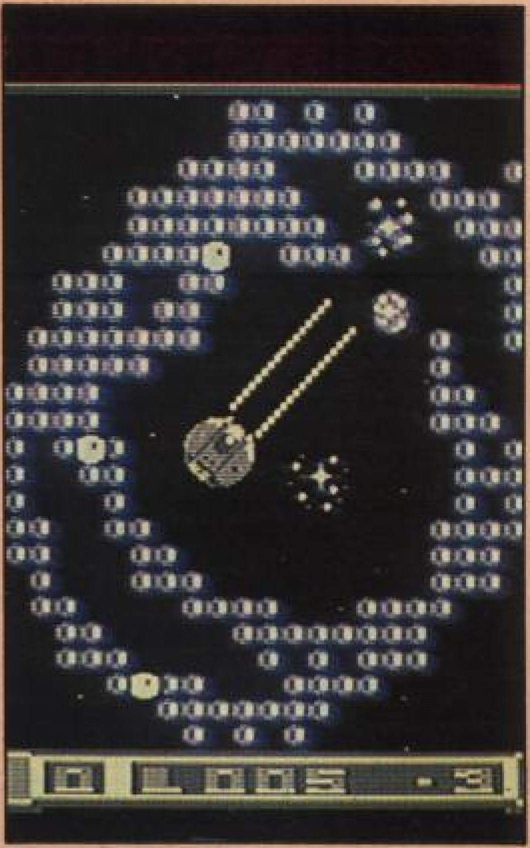
Sunday 31st January

Played a few games today. It's all research really! Vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups never seem to give you enough warning of what's coming, because the TV screen is tilted on its side compared to the arcade equivalents. In *Salamander* the scrolling alternates between horizontal and vertical, but you do have to change the gameplay to suit when your ship changes direction. I recently watched in admi-

ration as a friend of mine played through the entire game on one coin and then grumbled because he'd lost a ship. I think I'll ask him to playtest my next project!

Wednesday 3rd February

The last few days have been spent rewriting my sound effects editor. So many games seem to have the sound effects 'hung on' at the last moment, just before release, but I like to live with mine for a while first. It's rather like watching a silent film at early stages in the design of a game. Sometimes you get a shock when your aliens first open their mouths! I'm lucky in that I can produce my own, so much tweaking will go on as I finish the other parts of the game.



I tried to make the cells in Hunter's have pseudo-speech; not actually talking but making voice-like sounds. Really, the only way to perfect these is by continually changing different aspects of the sound in real time as you perfect the effect you're after. Most commercial editors have to be designed to be easy to learn by anyone, and often you spend more time looking at the keyboard than at the screen. Mine is approached more as a games player who wants to 'play' with the sound as I edit. It becomes another game to play when you want a change from coding – but the best sounds you store to be used in the game later!

A new front end has now been completed. Nearly all joystick controlled for the busy bits, and a few keys to leap on for switching channels and sounds. Sometimes it seems to work in games to use the odd key press during the action, but I can never cope with anything other than the space bar or RUN/STOP to pause. There seems to be a mini convention for shoot 'em up about which keys to use; Fire button to start, RUN/STOP to pause, 'Q' to quit. Hands up all those who load up an old favourite, and then panic when RUN/STOP doesn't pause the game when the 'phone rings!

Thursday 4th February

Visited ZZAP! offices to be serious, spread jollity and discuss life, the universe and everything. Julian and Steve gave me a great welcome (and a black coffee to bring me back to life after setting the alarm clock excruciatingly early – we programmers normally keep quite odd hours). Much talk about the industry ensued – if anyone's ears were burning during the afternoon they now know why! I also got a great chance to scrutinise the latest software offerings, shortly before they appear in the shops. I certainly know what I'll be buying next for my Atari ST (Oh, whoops what a giveaway!). I also had a long chat with Lloyd about ROM cartridges – apparently he thought the initials stood for Rip Off Merchants; probably due to their price. Thanks for an enjoyable day, guys!



Saturday 6th February

I'm still investigating the possibility of using a cross assembler on my ST (I can't afford to buy an OPUS). My last project on the 64 (I won't mention its name again!) ended up in six chunks of source code, and even with a turbo loading disk system it took over five minutes to assemble. This doesn't sound very long until you get a 'branch out of range' error after 4 minutes and 50 seconds and have to start all over again! If you read through your old issues you'll find that both previous 'diarists' have decided to go down the same road, and many software houses are now joining them. Ocean have installed an ST-based cross development system for their in-house team which even allows graphics and music to be produced for a range of machines on the ST – if they would consider selling it to outside parties I'd be very interested to hear from them!

The biggest advantage of a well-written system is that you can debug your 64 program while it's running – normally you either see the graphics screen or the debugger, but not both at once. By using the ST with a second monitor you can examine what is going on in your 64 on one screen whilst continuing to run the game graphics on the 64. Invaluable! I'll let you know how I get on.

Sunday 7th February

Knocked my piles of scribbles into one great heap today. Sorted through all the ideas and started a 'master' sheet to include all the compatible and best ideas for the next project. I now have a gameplan, a craft designed and plenty of ideas which may evolve or be discarded as everything progresses. I don't want to give everything away yet, but expect another shoot' em up with smarter-than-average 'baddies'. I intend to give them the same fire power as the player, so you'll have to think a bit more before you go in, guns blazing. I've also come up with a new level design system that allows a level of 16 screens in size to be defined in 32 bytes. Imagine the possibilities!

Monday 8th February

Mulled over tactics for new aliens. I like the feel of using the multiplexer but simply having 32 sprites whizzing about does not a game make. Intelligence is the order of the day, and teamwork will also figure in their attacks and tactics. It sounds a bit hazy, but I'd like to try out some ideas that seem very promising. More about them another time. Played a certain vertically scrolling shoot 'em up this afternoon, with an infinite lives poke. It didn't seem to have been playtested at all. The graphics were great, and it had all the ingredients of a classic but was almost impossible to play! If the bog standard ship speed had been slightly faster it would have played oh-so-much better. And in the furious action I more often than not shot my own approaching super weapons; if only they had been invulnerable I swear I could enjoy it a lot. But the most evil of all crimes happened – unfair collision detection. Is there anything worse than losing a ship when you're convinced that the approaching alien missed you by at least 2 pixels? Answers on a postcard please.

Tuesday 9th February

This will be the final entry for this month, as tomorrow I'm off to Exeter to visit Cyberdyne Systems, who helped with the mastering of HM. They want me to design the sound effects for their forthcoming game *Armalite*. So far it looks extremely polished and impressive, and if they can cram in all the features they intend to, it will certainly be on my list of essential purchases.

I've been stretching the SID chip in different ways today, in anticipation, and have now amassed a bank of percussive effects like metal blocks, milk bottles and elastic band twangs. These all help to refine the constant search for new and refined in-game sounds. It's fun, rewarding and doesn't damage your health. All in all a harmless pastime suitable for all the family and friends.

How many games are there in your collection that have the same old 'boing' and 'splats' that we've all heard so many times before. The first time I heard *Paradroid* I was sucked in. I was down there in the corridors with them – and due in no small part to the intelligent use of sound effects. Where would karate games be without the digitised grunt! And that Floyd-like backing track for *Delta* by Jabba the Hubbard was awesome, as a colleague of mine might say. Funny that. Last week I wandered into a shop and bought a woolly jumper with sheep on it. Just liked it I suppose.

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ZAP! 16-BIT

ALL THE LATEST AMIGA GAMES REVIEWED

INTERCEPTOR
THE BEST AMIGA GAME YET?





XENON
STRAIGHT FROM THE ARCADES

TAKE A TRIP WITH THE
TIME BANDIT

GOLDEN PATH
FULL OF EASTERN PROMISE?

XENON

Melbourne House, £19.95 disk, joystick or mouse with keys

After the 50-year Arachnid War, the universe has settled into a period of trading and artistic accomplishment. Philosophy and religion have reached a point where science has answered many of their fundamental mysteries. Spacecraft have been sent to the edge of the cosmos and found closed space, leading thinkers to believe that there were no more sentient species to be contacted. However, they were proven wrong with the sudden emergence of the Xenites, and their rapid colonisation of 15 planets. Now, ten years after their first appearance, the Xenites hold a grip of terror on the merchants and traders who dare to cross the vastness of space, for raids are frequent, swift and deadly.

Deep in space, a lone Federation fighter receives a mayday call, reporting that Xenite forces have attacked the fleet, which is now in need of urgent assistance. Unfortunately for the pilot, he is the *only* Federation fighter in the area – so the fate of the galaxy is in his hands . . .

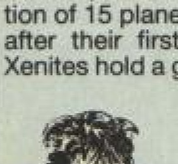
Taking control of the multi-role attack craft, the player cuts a swathe through Xenite territory in order to reach the fleet. This consists of four sectors, each split into four vertically scrolling zones of planet surface. The landscape is littered with domed gun emplacements and elevated constructions, which are negotiated by switching the craft between ground and air modes, giving a multi-directional tank-like vehicle, and a forward flying aircraft. The transition is initiated by either tapping the space bar or rapidly



► **Some of the small missile-spitting craft which occasionally appear from the top of the screen**



Xenon **could have been a brilliant game but for a couple of annoying features. The manual is useful and interesting and the digitised introductory sequence is typical of the game's neat touches. The backdrops are very pretty: the bas-relief is effective, there's a wealth of varied and beautifully drawn aliens, and the use of colour is superb, particularly the lovely explosion sequence. The wide range of aliens is nicely conceived, scuttling about in formations which prove genuinely challenging. Musically, it's curious but effective – an atmospheric enhancement of the gameplay. However, the main fault lies in the excessively sensitive control system; it would have benefited from an option to defeat the joystick method, relying solely on the space bar. Similarly, the motherships and end-of-level creatures can be extremely tedious to destroy since they require an excessive amount of strikes. However, these aren't crucial faults and the main blasting element is superb, particularly when you have a full array of homing missiles and triple lasers! The set sequence action doesn't prove too tedious, and although there are only four zones, it provides plenty of long-term, enjoyable action.**



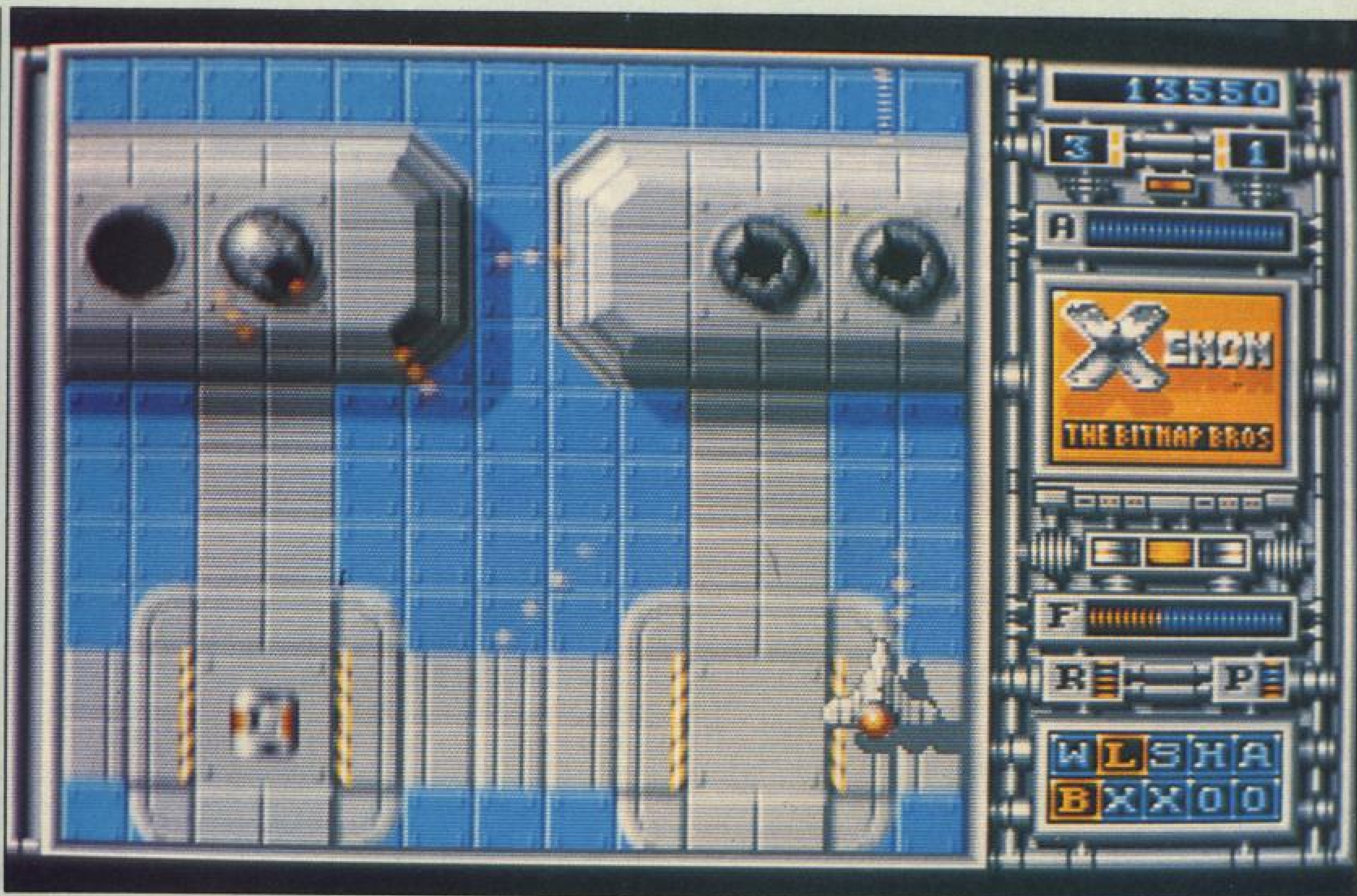
Forget any comparisons with the arcade original – this IS the arcade original! The graphics are superb, with backdrops ranging from stark metallic bas-relief structures on level one to almost organic growths on the fourth. The sprites are of a similar high quality, with some small, but nicely detailed enemy craft and absolutely superb giant motherships, especially the enormous alien-like battleship at the end of level two. Adding tension to the atmosphere are a series of excellent Whittaker soundtracks (which sound like very early Ultravox) – the one which pounds away when the end-of-level guardian appears is particularly good. One thing that is immediately offputting is the difficulty level – the odds seem almost overwhealming at the start. However, once you work out which weapons to pick up and become familiar with the attack waves – objects and alien craft always appear in the same places – headway is soon made. Anyway, I find that the difficulty level makes the action all the more addictive, and constantly return for 'just one more go'. The only thing that does annoy is the slightly over-sensitive control, which occasionally causes the craft to switch from tank to aircraft (or vice-versa) just when you don't want to. This aside, *Xenon* **is extremely slick and oozes playability – don't let it pass you by.**

► **The end-of-level mothership proves a rather tough adversary . . .**



As vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups go, *Xenon* **isn't bad at all; in fact it does this tired old genre some credit. The dual-purpose craft is an excellent invention, but the selection method is rather unreliable insofar that it tends to switch between ground and air attack even when the joystick isn't being frantically wiggled, putting the player in some sticky spots! Although the programmers have stuck to what has become the rather hackneyed metallic bas-relief style, the overall look of the game is very good. Sound, too, is well used with a pacey Whittaker soundtrack backing the action. Where the game falls down, though, is on the level of difficulty: negotiating the first zone is relatively easy, but then you come across the first sentinel which, even with a good supply of weapons, proves very hard to destroy. The real shock comes when you realise that after battling past this monstrous spaceship you're still only half-way through the level! Well, at least it'll take a while to see all four levels, but frustration might have built up to intolerable levels before then. However, if shooting 'em up is what you do best, you should find** *Xenon* **a worthwhile purchase.**





► **Flying low over the smart bas-relief gun emplacements in *Xenon***

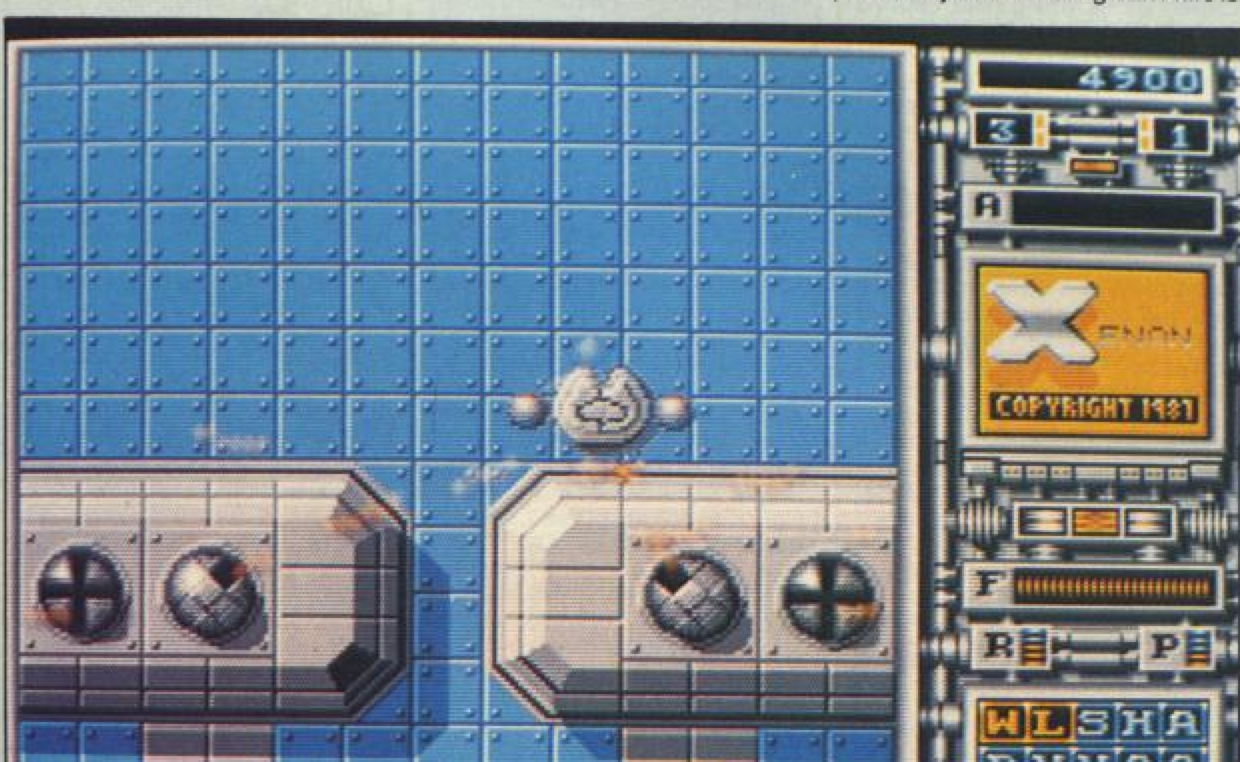
waggling the joystick from side to side.

Shooting alien formations and gun emplacements occasionally reveals power pills, which bestow special features on the attack craft, including: force shield, eight-way homing missiles, laser/bullet switches, increased shot power, increased ground craft speed, side-firing lasers, smart bomb, wingtip laser pods, and up to three 'Multiples' which follow in the path of the craft and mimic the player's firing.

As alien hits strike home, fuel is lost from the ship's supply, represented by a diminishing bar. A life is lost when the tank is drained, but additional fuel is gathered on collection of the appropriate power pills.

Between zones, a sentinel ship appears which is shot repeatedly in a specific spot before it is destroyed. The player is given three craft to complete the entire mission, and extra ones are granted at regular periods during the mission.

► **Complete with side-pod lasers, the *Xenon* tank trundles toward its goal**



PRESENTATION 64%
One or two-player options and good screen layout, but switching between ships isn't well facilitated.

GRAPHICS 83%
Detailed and smooth-running sprites and great bas-relief backdrops.

SOUND 85%
Fast and atmospheric David Whittaker tune coupled with effective blasting noises.

HOOKABILITY 86%
To experience explosive carnage of this order is to be instantly addicted.

LASTABILITY 82%
Infuriatingly tough to beat, but enjoyable nevertheless.

OVERALL 84%
Not very innovative, but a dynamic, polished and addictive shoot 'em up all the same.

BALL RAIDER

King Size, £9.95 disk, joystick only

It's the year 2488 and the ultimate test for any would-be member of the Guild of Warriors is *Ball Raider*. Joining this elite group requires that the player clears 25 levels of brick formations by co-ordination of bat and ball, in true *Breakout* fashion.

As is the norm with games of this



The backdrops are certainly appealing, but unfortunately the gameplay just doesn't match. The bat is quite responsive, but the ball always bounces off at the same angle, often making the last few bricks very difficult to hit. In this case it's patience, rather than skill that's the key to success. One thing that really does cheese me off – and it's not just with this game – is the use of a single short sampled tune, which is looped time and time again to form a soundtrack. Why can't programmers take advantage of the Amiga's amazing sound chip and produce a proper tune – like we hear on the 64! I'd recommend Breakout **fans to wait for** Arkanoid.



▶ **Smart backdrops do little to hide the simple ancestry of *Ball Raider***



If Ball Raider**'s gameplay matched its superb fantasy pixel-painting backdrops it would be a fabulous game, but as it is, it's the most simplistic of the new breed of** Arkanoid **clones that I've seen. The blocks are arranged in the same unimaginative pattern for each screen, and the ball reflection is limited to 45°. Sound is used minimally, with weedy digitised effects and a rather irritating piece of music creating an inappropriate ambience. The 'special effects' add very little to the fun, bringing the game very close to the level of the original** Breakout**, which, although mildly playable and addictive, has since been surpassed by the imagination and variation shown in games such as** Batty **and** Traz**. I've grown to expect a lot more, especially from a machine with almost limitless scope.**



The graphic presentation of Ball Raider **is superb, from the atmospheric title screens to the beautiful game backdrops. Unfortunately, this innovative structure is marred by the extremely repetitive and tedious gameplay. The bat is unspectacular and the destructible blocks simplistic, arranged in patterns so uninspired it's soon becomes a chore to clear them. The ball ricochet off the bat is appallingly unsophisticated, resulting in poor control over the direction of movement. Skill is eliminated in favour of luck and patience. Apart from the extremely pretty background graphics, there's little inter-screen variety, and even these can become annoying when they detract from the ball movement. The well-produced disco-beat soundtrack is appealing at first, with its subtly throbbing drum beat and sharp, synthesised swishes and echoes. After a while, however, this too becomes annoying: it doesn't *really* suit the gameplay.** Ball Raider **does little to further the cause of the** Breakout **format.**

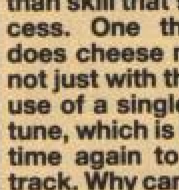
KWASIMODO

King Size, £9.95 disk, joystick only

The lovable hunchback campanologist leaps his way onto the Amiga in time-honoured style. For those not familiar with this ageing game, a quick resumé is doubtless in order.

Kwasimodo's true love, Esmeralda, is being held captive in the dungeons of the Wicked Warlord, and he has taken it upon himself to rescue her. This he can only do by traversing the tops of 25 walls which are inhabited by the Warlord's minions, who thrust and throw items of period weaponry at our hero, all of which spell doom should they impinge upon his person.

The wall itself presents hazards to be jumped across in the form of



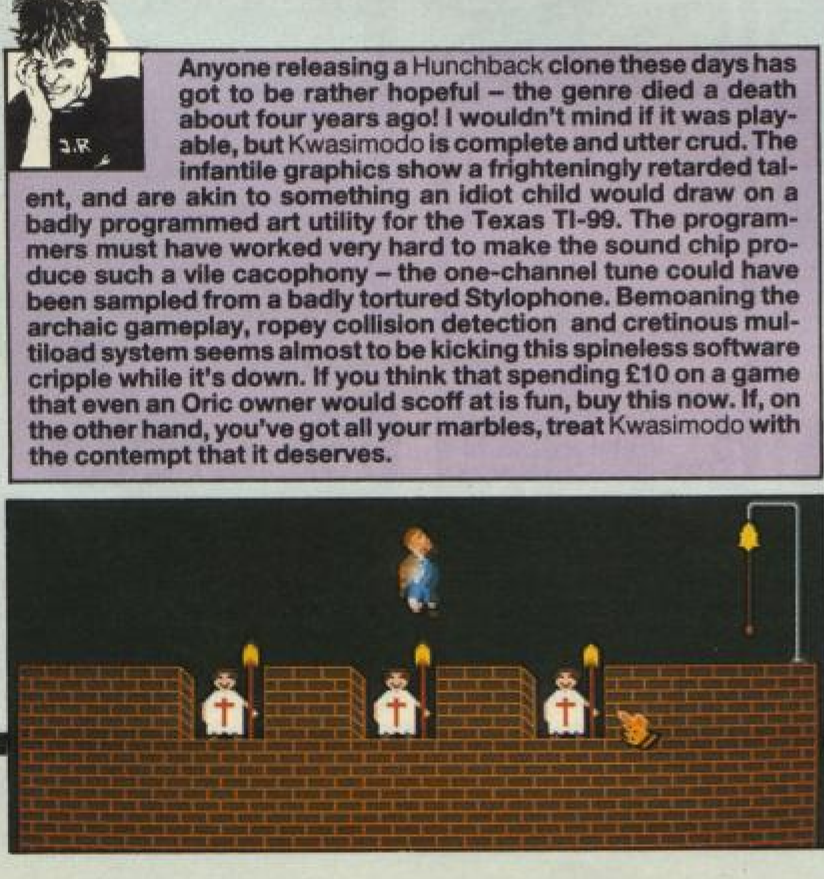
Anyone releasing a Hunchback **clone these days has got to be rather hopeful – the genre died a death about four years ago! I wouldn't mind if it was playable, but** Kwasimodo **is complete and utter crud. The infantile graphics show a frighteningly retarded talent, and are akin to something an idiot child would draw on a badly programmed art utility for the Texas TI-99. The programmers must have worked very hard to make the sound chip produce such a vile cacophony – the one-channel tune could have been sampled from a badly tortured Stylophone. Bemoaning the archaic gameplay, ropey collision detection and cretinous multiload system seems almost to be kicking this spineless software cripple while it's down. If you think that spending £10 on a game that even an Oric owner would scoff at is fun, buy this now. If, on the other hand, you've got all your marbles, treat** Kwasimodo **with the contempt that it deserves.**



Our poor old Amiga must feel really tortured having to wrap its multi-tasking dedicated chips round this digital sewage. I'd love to hear the logic which deemed Kwasimodo **fit for distribution and, dare I say it, purchase. The graphics are a joke: from an unbelievably simplistic title screen, you're sadistically dragged to the in-game graphics. The backdrops are unforgivably colourless and hopelessly blocky; the main sprite lacks any character or decent animation and the soldier sprites are basic to say the least. The sound, however, is beyond a joke: purile tunes whimper along, one discordant note at a time, adding to the overall impression of ineptitude. Even the version of** Hunchback **I've played on the humble Acorn Electron was more polished and professional than this. I can't pour enough scorn on this prime example of 'cashing in'.**



Well, what can I say except, 'Oh dear'. We've seen some pretty poor Amiga games this month, but this one really takes the biscuit. The spirit of the original Hunchback **is more or less there, but it was never much of a game to start with – certainly not enough to make up for the terrible appearance of this 16-bit incarnation. The graphics are so simply drawn and animated that they quickly become the object of much amusement and derision. Take the guards on the walls, for example, with their inane grins and telescopic spears, or the ridiculous Kwasimodo sprite, which looks like he has a bouncing sack of mail on his back. The real joke is the high score table, which placed my first score of 2,700 above the top score of 10,000. Yuk, yuk yuk! Unfortunately, the laughing has to stop when you realise that this 'budget' product still sets the consumer back a tenner.**



genre, beaten bricks often yield special powers which affect gameplay, such as Slow Ball, Fast Ball, Stop Ball (which allows the player to hold the ball on the bat and then release it elsewhere), Free Ball (effectively an extra life), and Magic Field (to leave the current screen without having to destroy the last brick).

PRESENTATION 33%
Little more than an animated high score table. Inability to use the mouse.

GRAPHICS 82%
Fabulous fantasy backdrops, sadly all too often hidden by bland game graphics.

SOUND 40%
Insipid light disco soundtrack and digitised 'clunk' effects.

HOOKABILITY 40%
Less than average for this type of game, because of bland playing style.

LASTABILITY 38%
Only lasting appeal is to see the next of the 25 smart backgrounds.

OVERALL 39%
Terrific backdrops don't make up for uninspiring gameplay.

castellations and extending brick bridges. All of these must be overcome for Kwasimodo to complete each level, signalled by the ringing of a bell on the far right of each screen. At this, the screen scrolls across and the next level stands ready to be tackled.

PRESENTATION 9%
Flawed high score table. Each screen is loaded individually causing annoying delays. Sluggish joystick response and ropey collision detection.

GRAPHICS 7%
Ridiculous, primary school standard graphics, with flickery sprites.

SOUND 3%
Grinding monotone tune.

HOOKABILITY 7%
Slow and lacking any form of addictive qualities.

LASTABILITY 3%
The overall awfulness causes interest to wane after a couple of games.

OVERALL 3%
One to really give you the hump.

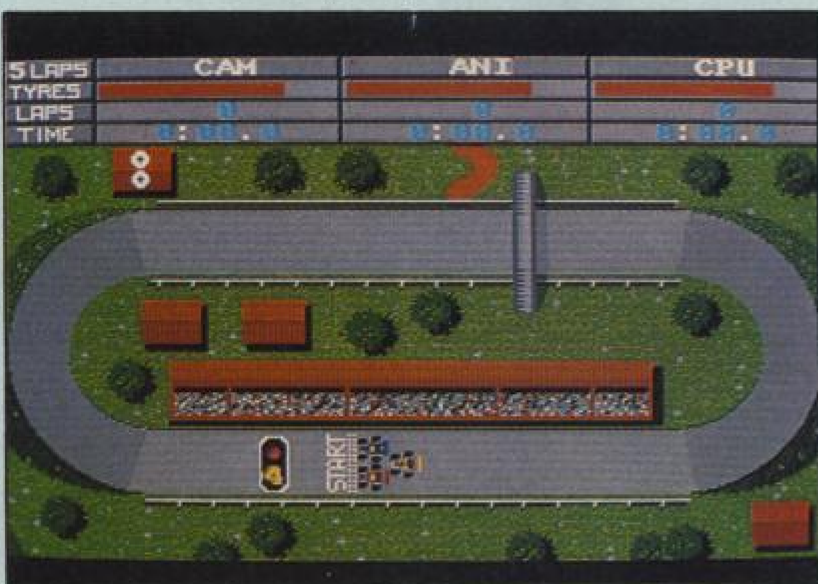
KARTING GRAND PRIX

Anco, Amiga £9.95 disk, joystick only

Anco's *Karting Grand Prix* affords the player the opportunity to negotiate a series of tracks of varying difficulty against up to two other opponents,

Budding drivers are initially confronted with an options screen, from which game parameters are altered. At least one driver is controlled by the computer, and one or two human players can take the wheel of either remaining kart. The weather conditions are changed to icy, wet or dry, and tyres and sprocket rating are altered to suit. The players' status may also be modified from novice to amateur, and any of the eight tracks can be practised before launching into the game itself.

► **Even the brilliant sampled sound effects fail to save *Karting Grand Prix* from obscurity**



The overhead display shows the track and surrounding landscape features, while an information panel in the top quarter of the screen shows the number of laps required, the number of laps currently completed, a tyre strength meter and an elapsed time counter.

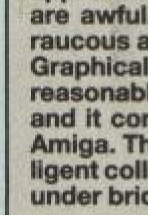
No qualification is necessary, since any of the tracks are tackled at any point. Total and best lap times plus bonuses are recorded on a highscore table displayed at the end of each race.



I'm quite a Super Sprint **fan, but can't honestly admit to liking this bad example of the genre. The general presentation is poor, with a dire title screen and an endlessly repeating 10 second sampled 'tune', which soon becomes tiresome. Although there's a comprehensive series of options, none seem to make any difference to the action, and the control method is simply awful. Karts often career off the track, with a complete disregard of joystick instruction, and it takes very little time for frustration to set in. At £10,** Karting Grand Prix **might be classed as 'budget', but personally I'd prefer to save a few more pounds and buy something which gives far more entertainment.**



This really isn't much of an advance over Code Masters' 8-bit Grand Prix Simulator**: the graphics may be a vast improvement, but the 'karts' are just as awkward to handle. There's a comprehensive range of options, but they really don't effect any major change in the gameplay: they're basically a pointless gloss over the poor game design. The sampled soundtrack is quite approachable, but repeats too quickly, and the in-game effects are awful. The digitised engine roar and crashing sounds are raucous and prove an annoyance once the novelty has worn off. Graphically it's merely competent: moderately detailed and reasonably drawn, the colour and definition are both simplistic, and it contains possibly the worse title screen I've seen on an Amiga. Then there's the gameplay, with its occasionally unintelligent collision detection and the odd screen glitch when passing under bridges. Not recommended . . .**



Although it obviously tries to emulate the Super Sprint **style of racing game,** Karting Grand Prix **fails because of the awful presentation. True, there are plenty of options to tinker with, but most of them seem to have little or no effect on the gameplay. They only serve to present a superfluous facade of polish on an otherwise rough-hewn game. It plays very badly – a fault probably attributable to the control method which had my kart leaping off the track at every opportunity. Aesthetically the game is no better: the graphics are unrealistic and fail to create the desired atmosphere, and use of the sound chip seems to lend itself to the term 'half-baked'. Vivid samples of screeching tyres and dustbins being kicked over lend a rather humorous air to the proceedings, but once the laughs have died down there isn't much here to allow recommendation. Just the opposite, in fact.**

PRESENTATION 51%
Clear screen display, average high score table and an array of options which don't significantly alter the gameplay.

GRAPHICS 37%
Fairly detailed, but too simplistic considering the machine's capabilities. A little colourless.

SOUND 27%
A continuously repeated snatch of sampled soundtrack, and laughable, over-the-top effects.

HOOKABILITY 37%
Frustrating and clumsy gameplay aggravated by unattractive graphics and sound.

LASTABILITY 17%
Unrewarding for the amount of effort required, and there are only eight fairly similar tracks.

OVERALL 28%
Even at this price, it's one of the poorest *Super Sprint* clones available on any machine.

GOLDEN PATH

Firebird, £19.95 disk, mouse only

Long ago, even before the Great Wall was built, China was ruled by its greatest emperor, Y'in Hsi – the Golden Emperor. Under his reign, China grew prosperous and many tales were told of him, but as time passed all were lost, with the exception of one: a single tome, entitled 'The Golden Path'. This tale tells of how Y'in Hsi was taken into the care of Buddhist monks at the age of two, when his home province was invaded by a neighbouring warlord, who pillaged the land and killed the boy's father in the process.

On Y'in Hsi's 16th birthday the chief monk tells him of a quest he must complete before fully joining the brotherhood of monks, who have become his guardians and mentors. After revealing the story of his father's death, he gives the boy a scroll, written by his father, together with his ring. Y'in Hsi wears the ring and immediately takes on what would have been the aged countenance of his father had he still been alive. The only way to free himself of the enchantment is to take on the quest for Enlightenment, and free the enslaved populace of his rightful kingdom.



► Wandering around the labyrinthine cave system

Golden Path is an arcade adventure which follows Y'in Hsi on his quest through 37 locations, occupied by 20 characters, 40 'life' situations and 50 puzzles.

The game screen is split into four sections which are controlled using a mouse-operated cursor. A large action display dominates the main screen and shows the current location, allowing the characters and objects within it to be manipulated. A 'Book of Knowledge' icon in the bottom left of the screen gives a verbal description of the location, plus any developments made due to the player's actions.

Y'in Hsi can carry four objects, illustrated by a four 'pocket' inventory display situated at the bottom of the screen. To its right there's a



Golden Path combines excellent presentation with gorgeous graphics to produce an arcade adventure which, if not original, contains enough puzzling action to prove compelling. The large accompanying novella is as useful as it's entertaining and provides an atmospheric and functional background to the scenario. Moreover, with every death there's a comprehensive report which proves as helpful. The details are very impressive: clue scrolls, characters who change form, the vine life-gauge, the inset copy of the playing area with routes detailed: plainly the imagination that went into the creation of the game has paid off. The oriental soundtrack is subtle enough to be atmospheric, and many of the vocal effects are impressive. All the backdrops are beautiful: varied, very detailed and extremely colourful, and some locations are outstanding: the animation on the waterfall and several of the interiors, for example. The monk and most of the accompanying figures match this standard. Even though there are only 37 locations, there are a host of characters and objects with puzzles to solve. The action *just* fails to match the presentation, but doesn't detract from the package as a whole. Take a look.



► Y'in Hsi continues his quest for enlightenment







reduced picture of the current location, with a trail of red or yellow 'incense' dots showing the route of the Golden Path leading to the exits for that location.

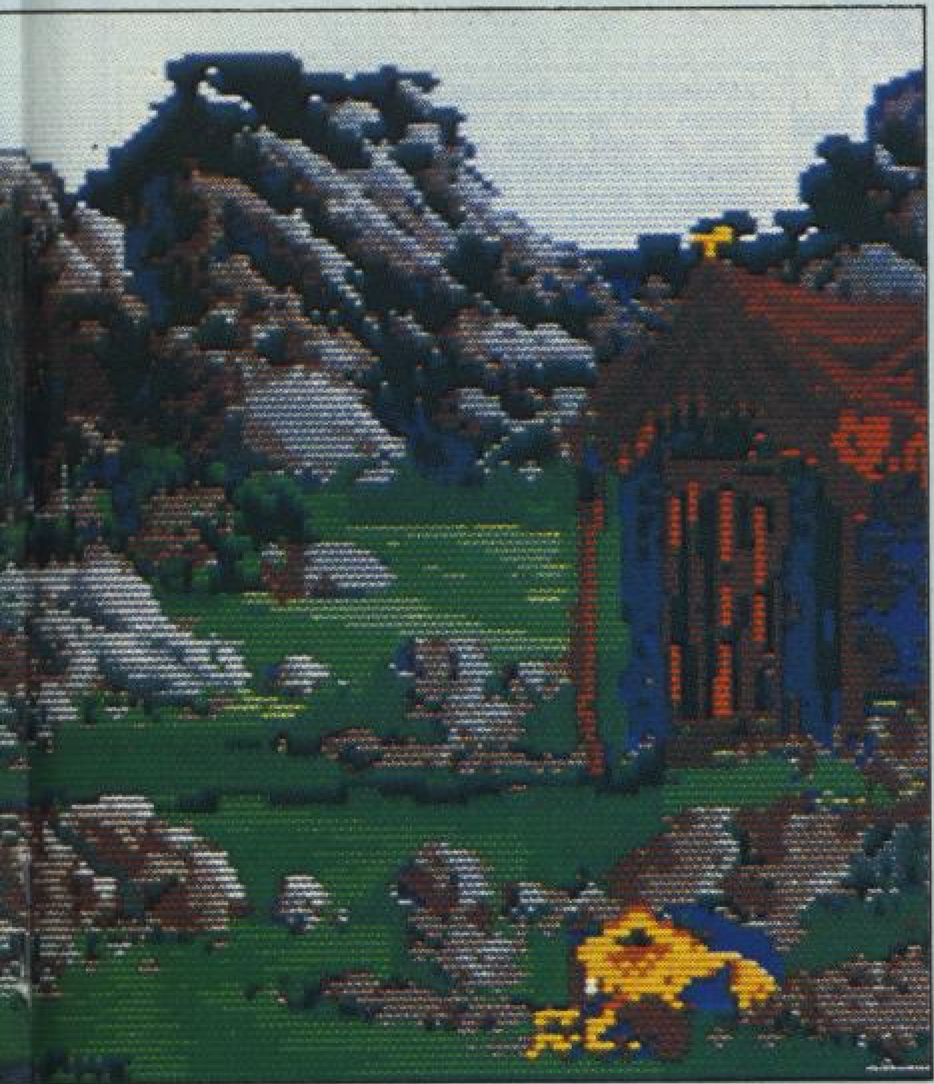
The player directs Y'in Hsi's path by moving the cursor appropriately and pressing the mouse button. Y'in can also be made to pick up, drop or use objects as well as being able to defend himself from robbers and goblins by kicking or punching.

Y'in Hsi only has limited energy for combat, and his life-force is represented by a vine which grows or withers across the middle of the screen. Making progress by solving a puzzle, for instance, makes the vine flourish, but being injured causes it to wither. When the vine is gone Y'in Hsi dies, signalling the end of the quest.

To aid completion of the game, the program supports a game load/save option as well as the ability to restart a game from the last position, but at an increased difficulty level.

▶ **Superb pastel backdrops add to the oriental atmosphere of *Golden Path***

▶ **Just one of the 37 locations featured in Firebird's adventure collect 'em up**





The trouble with many arcade adventures is that they're little more than vehicles for trite arcade action with a token puzzle or two thrown in to compensate for lack of depth. After all, if you were playing an adventure game you wouldn't expect to be beating someone up or gunning people down every few seconds would you? Golden Path **is definitely biased more towards adventuring than fighting though, with the mouse-controlled action being more of an extension of an adventure's 'Attack' command. Although the puzzles and sub-plots seem gauged to appeal to as wide a range of gamers as possible (that is, they're moderately easy to understand), things never become as linear as some poor adventures in which the player is led from one scenario to the next, not through their own choosing but through the author's lack of thought in giving sufficient options. Even though there are only a few commands at the player's disposal,** Golden Path **never has the player stymied for want of a suitable action. Pretty graphics, appealing music and some fun sound effects are just the icing on a very palatable cake.**



As should be expected from the Amiga, the static graphics of Golden Path **are very good indeed. There are a couple of exceptions which tend toward the gaudy side, but on the whole a pleasant and subtle oriental atmosphere is generated. The accompanying figures are also well drawn but, apart from Y'in Hsi himself, suffer slightly from limited animation. I personally found the soundtrack awful: the pseudo-Chinese wailings were ill-suited to the gently rural backdrops and just made me reach for the volume control. Mouse control is surprisingly effective, and most commands and actions are accessed with relative ease making prolonged play quite comfortable. Indeed, the play itself is quite engrossing: there's plenty to see and do, and the puzzles are quite easy to solve. A weak link in the game is combat, which is rather simplistic, but thankfully is required only occasionally. A pleasant and not-too-taxing adventure, which should have quite a large appeal.**

PRESENTATION 91%
Packaged with a clue-ridden novella. Well presented on-screen, with useful save/load and restart game options.

GRAPHICS 85%
Colourful and detailed sprites and backdrops, which are most appealing and very atmospheric.

SOUND 59%
A selection of reasonable Oriental melodies with a few digitised sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 84%
Easy to get into and rewards are soon reaped.

LASTABILITY 81%
37 locations isn't many but they're packed with things to do.

OVERALL 85%
Full of Eastern promise.

OTHELLO

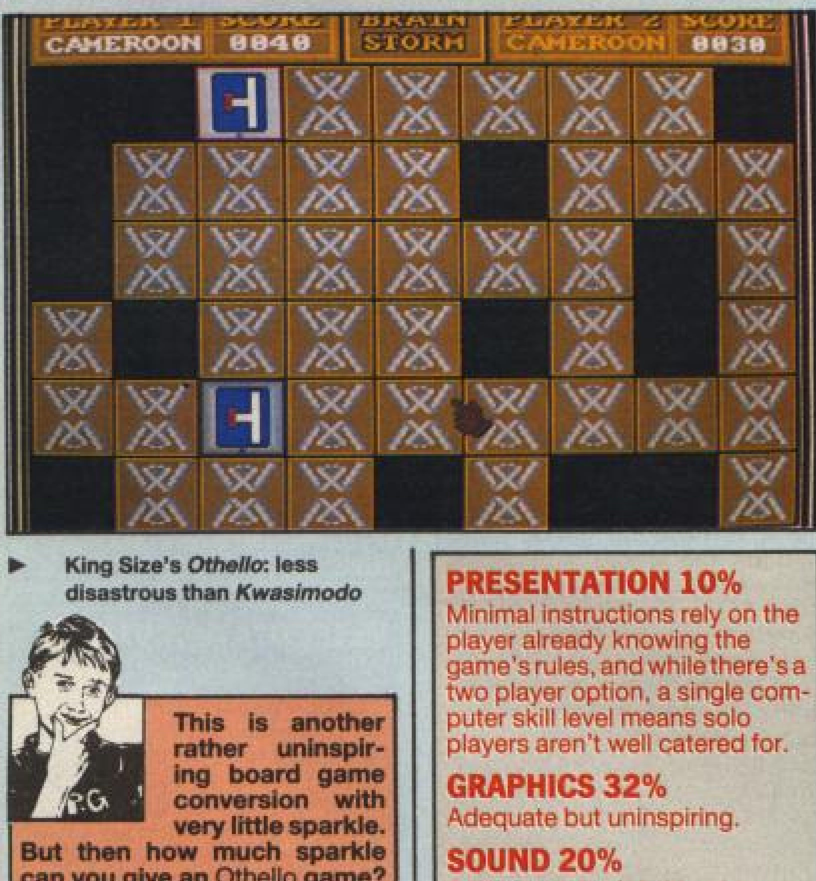
King Size, £9.95 disk, mouse only

This classic strategy board game involves two players attempting to capture squares on a chess-style board by the placement of counters coloured black on one side and white on the other.

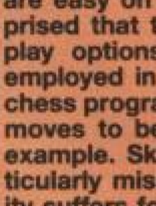
A player places each counter so that it forms a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line, having one of his counters at the other end and at least one opposing counter between them. The outflanked counters are then turned over to form a continuous line of one colour, and play continues. The winner is the player with the higher number of captured squares when all the counters are used.



The value of putting Othello **onto a computer is fairly limited, especially when the presentation is as weak as this. What the package really lacks is gloss: a larger range of options would have been appreciated. For example, the choice between 3D and overhead viewpoints is now almost standard for this kind of game; similarly, there could have been an option to change the colours, or a help facility, or suggested moves . . . That said, it's attractive enough to play: the computer opponent is very quick and at least thinks ahead more than the next move. The 'action' proves relatively compulsive whenever you pick it up, and although no essential purchase, you can always come back to it for some taxing relaxation.**



► King Size's *Othello*: less disastrous than *Kwasimodo*



This is another rather uninspiring board game conversion with very little sparkle. But then how much sparkle can you give an Othello **game? The graphics, while being rather bland, are at least unambiguous, and the colours are easy on the eye. I'm surprised that there aren't more play options such as those employed in the more recent chess programs, allowing bad moves to be taken back, for example. Skill levels are particularly missed, and lastability suffers for their absence – once I'd worked out the best strategy to beat it, I knew I wouldn't be coming back for more.**

PRESENTATION 10%
Minimal instructions rely on the player already knowing the game's rules, and while there's a two player option, a single computer skill level means solo players aren't well catered for.

GRAPHICS 32%
Adequate but uninspiring.

SOUND 20%
A tiny snatch of digitised music while loading, but little else.

HOOKABILITY 52%
As initially interesting as the board game.

LASTABILITY 23%
The computer's strategy is easy to grasp, and there's only one skill level to beat.

OVERALL 31%
Not bad as far as it goes, but *Othello*'s limitations make it poor value for money.

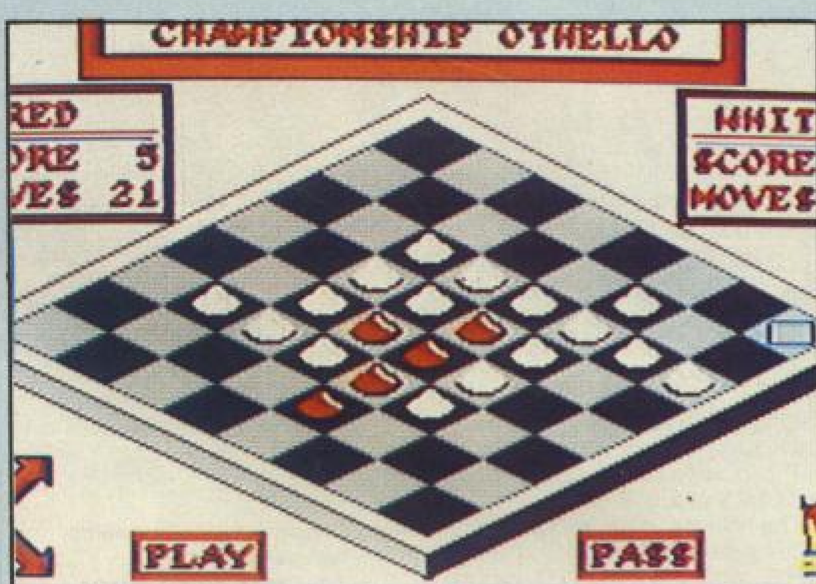
BRAINSTORM

Robtek, £9.95 disk, mouse only

The old card game which calls upon a player's memory to help determine and select matching pairs from a spread out pack has been transposed onto the Amiga by King Size.

At the start the player is faced with an array of fifty four cards, all face down. A mouse-operated hand is used to pick a pair of cards which are turned over to display a picture each. If the cards match, the current player gains points and chooses another pair. If they differ, the cards are turned back over and the other player attempts to find a pair. Play continues until the board is cleared of cards, whereupon the player with the most points is declared the winner.

► *Brainstorm* – a computer version of the simple card game, 'Pairs'





Although it's not the most adventurous of games to design and program, the producers of Brainstorm **have at least made a competent job of it. The number and variety of options is pleasing, and the computer proves a challenging opponent to beat. Sound is practically unused, but the graphics are nicely done. The main interest group for this game is undoubtedly the under-tens, and any Amiga-owning parents should find this will keep the kids amused on a wet afternoon. However, I can't see this proving worthwhile for anyone else.**



Brainstorm **is very much a game for the younger Amiga user (if there are any), but for experienced games players, its rather limited appeal should soon disappear. Graphically it's quite cute, if very basic and blocky in places, but the different cards are colourful and varied, providing a skill level based on relative difficulty of interpretation – the drawings range from very specific and simple designs to abstract 'artistic' efforts. The neat presentation, two player option and multiple computer skill levels help prolong playability, but overall, the simplistic gameplay proves ultimately dull.**

PRESENTATION 81%
Plenty of useful game options and six sets of cards to play with.

GRAPHICS 55%
Simplistic, but colourful card graphics.

SOUND 5%
One or two poor effects.

HOOKABILITY 48%
Not particularly addictive, but quite playable.

LASTABILITY 45%
Gameplay doesn't change at all, but the different card sets provide some much-needed variety.

OVERALL 52%
A nicely implemented version of the parlour game, which should fill in a young player's afternoon.

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TIME BANDIT

Microdeal, £19.95 disk, joystick with keys

●Microdeal's compulsive and extensive *Gauntlet* variant

Microdeal's chronological adventure casts the player in the role of a time traveller, seeking out fame and fortune in real and mythical historical periods.

From the title screen, joystick or keyboard controls and one or two-player options are selected prior to commencing play. The screen display then alters according to the number of participants: a solo player's actions are displayed using all the available area, while two-player mode sees the screen divided horizontally, each player having their own viewing screen. The information panel remains the same, however, giving the number of cubits acquired, the life levels remaining (initially ten, decreasing on contact with monsters) and the status acquired (increased by shooting guardians). Additionally, the location name and difficulty level are displayed.

The main four-way scrolling landscape contains 16 graphic icons, contact with which reveal further landscapes in the form of mazes, which are completed by escaping their labyrinthine passageways. Each maze carries a different theme, from spaceship interiors to a *PacMan*-style network, and often feature a variety of aliens and items to be shot, avoided or used as necessary.

Each location has 16 levels of difficulty, and completing the last



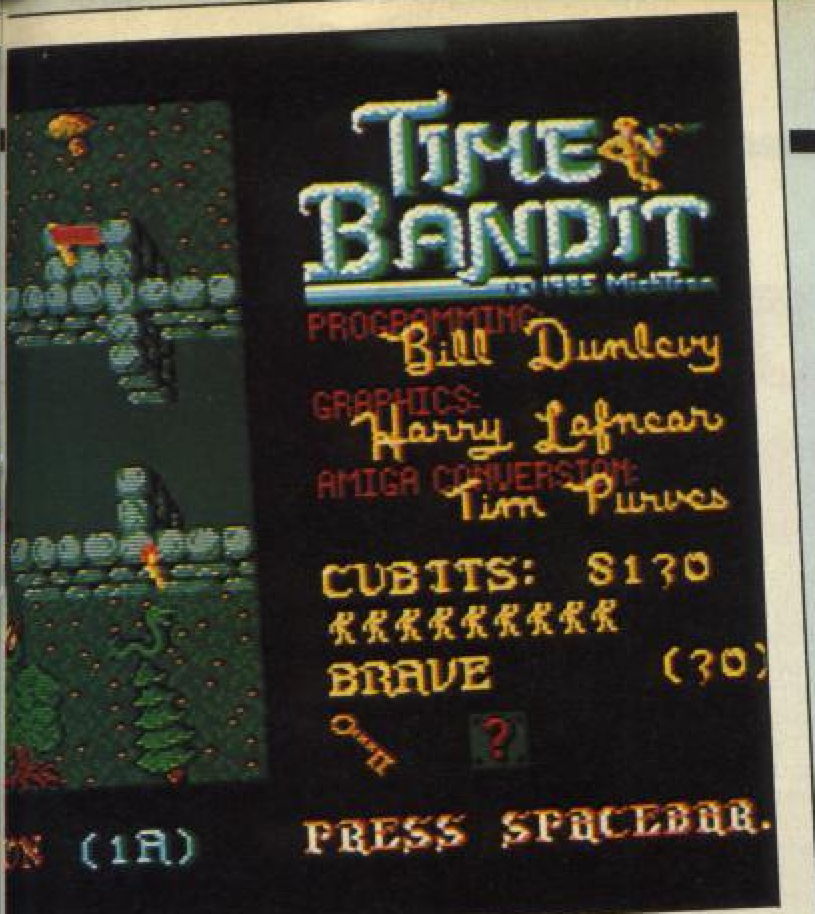






It may look like another Gauntlet **clone, but** Time Bandit **takes the old theme and improves on it enormously by bringing in sixteen selectable scenarios, each with sixteen levels, and then making the game more interesting with some mini quests to be fulfilled. The essential two-player game is also much better for the presence of a small screen for each player, allowing independent exploration. Even so, the limited view makes it all the more important to work as a team, which is far more sociable and fun. What had me coming back for more, though, was the ability to play lots of clever variations on the same theme (I never thought I would see a** Gauntlet **style** Pacman**!), rather like having a compendium of arcade adventure games all linked together. Graphics throughout are respectable and the sound effects are adequate, though the absence of a good soundtrack is lamentable. Not sufficiently lamentable to stop me recommending what is a great game, though.**







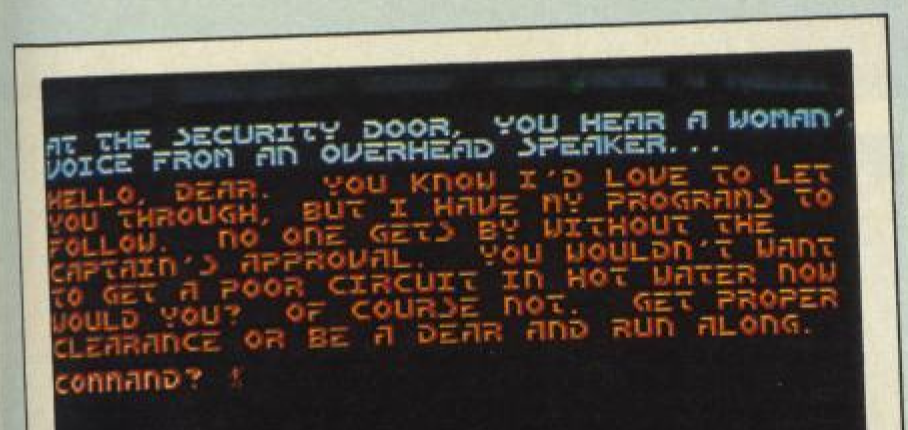
Time Bandit is one of my all-time favourite games. It's basically a very souped-up Gauntlet clone, but has enormous depth. The graphics are quite unusual, with tiny, but nicely detailed and animated sprites and some great backgrounds. The little bouncing heads are particularly appealing – watch their expressions change when they're splattered! There's plenty of variety in the gameplay, with a (somewhat tricky) mini text adventure to solve, a plethora of puzzles to overcome, a brilliant PacMan game and plenty of enemy sprites to blast into oblivion. All these genres are well implemented, and make for some very involved and interesting gaming. One minute you're rushing around a maze collecting dots and power pills and avoiding the marauding ghosts, the next you're battling gladiators and lions in the middle of a Roman Coliseum, attempting to communicate with a spaceship computer and even trying to obtain a sheep from a humble shepherd! There are 16 different screens, and each one has to be entered and solved 16 times before it's 'closed' and an icon awarded. Things start off easy, but as progress is made, the going gets very tough, with new areas opening up, increasingly hostile and faster aliens and new creatures being brought into the proceedings. Some levels require sub-tasks to be completed, including destroying a giant snake, finding objects and navigating a spaceship. I like the way the game can be played in any old fashion – you can try and solve one level, or tackle them in any order. The gameplay is very challenging indeed, and is rewarding enough to keep you coming back time and time again. Time Bandit is a classic, and shouldn't be missed at any cost.

one causes that maze system to shut down. Completion of the entire landscape thus requires the completion of 256 such mazes, and the task is made harder every time a location is re-entered.

I wouldn't exactly call this 'the best game ever', but it's certainly one of the better ones to appear on the Amiga so far. To call it a basic Gauntlet format is almost an insult, because there's so much more involved. The variety is what really makes it special, with a wide range of bug-eyed monsters, metallic aliens, and mysterious eyes . . . watch out for the look of surprise on the bouncing heads when they're shot! Conversing with characters is brilliantly implemented, and gives a strong sense of interaction within the created scenario. You can let go with some furious blasting action over 16 levels in a multitude of locations, or you can indulge yourself in a simple PacMan variant. There are books, scrolls and signs to look at, puzzles to solve and enough creatures to satisfy any dungeon freak. This playability is more than complemented by the graphics: the backdrops are all beautifully drawn and very clear (as they should be), creating a total graphical effect of wide variety, masses of colour and evocative detail. The sound, however, is a bit of a let-down: it's crisp, but not very varied; all the effects are simple and only hinder the atmosphere. Overall, though, it's sensibly priced, varied, action-packed and extremely enjoyable: there's no excuse to miss it.



An adventure sequence during the main landscape allows interaction with various characters, taking a standard verb/noun or simple response format. Talking to characters is necessary to acquire hidden rewards or to solve puzzles that aid progress.



PRESENTATION 89%
Comprehensive instructions. Good two-player option and a superb high score table which automatically saves to disk, complete with status.

GRAPHICS 78%
Clearly drawn, very colourful and detailed. The sprites are small, but very nicely designed and animated.

SOUND 18%
Varied, but feeble effects which detract from the atmosphere.

HOOKABILITY 93%
An easy game to start playing, with full freedom of movement between and within landscapes

LASTABILITY 96%
A multitude of varied and exciting areas to explore, and the task grows ever more difficult.

OVERALL 92%
A first-class potpourri of genres, with incredible depth and playability.

COMING SOON TO AN AMIGA NEAR YOU

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

INTERCEPTOR

Boasting unique, superfast, filled-in 3D graphics, *Interceptor* launches Electronic Arts into the Amiga combat flight simulation market. It offers computer pilots the opportunity of controlling one of two real-life fighter planes, the F-18 Hornet and the F-16 Falcon.

Incorporating six combat missions (three for each fighter), the action takes place in the skies over the San Francisco Bay area. The F-18 Hornet pilots can take off and land at three actual Bay Area airports, whilst F-16 Falcon aces can 'experience the thrill' of taking off from – and returning to land on – the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise.

The program contains six missions based on potential contemporary scenarios. These incorporate protecting Air Force One from enemy fighters as the President seeks to land safely at San Francisco International Airport; preventing World War III by eliminating incoming cruise missiles; rescuing a pilot downed at sea; visually identifying an unknown plane that has appeared on radar; and preventing the escape of two stolen F-16s. In addition, the game offers a training mission, a top secret mission for advanced pilots and a free-flight mode.

As you can see from the screen shots, *Interceptor*'s graphics reveal some impressive detail, with full freedom of movement within the mission boundaries. The 3D solid-fill effects let pilots buzz the Transamerica Pyramid and fly under the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges. It's claimed that the flight experience is 'more smooth, fluid and responsive' than any previous EA flight simulation. For enhanced realism, both the buildings and the plane cast shadows.

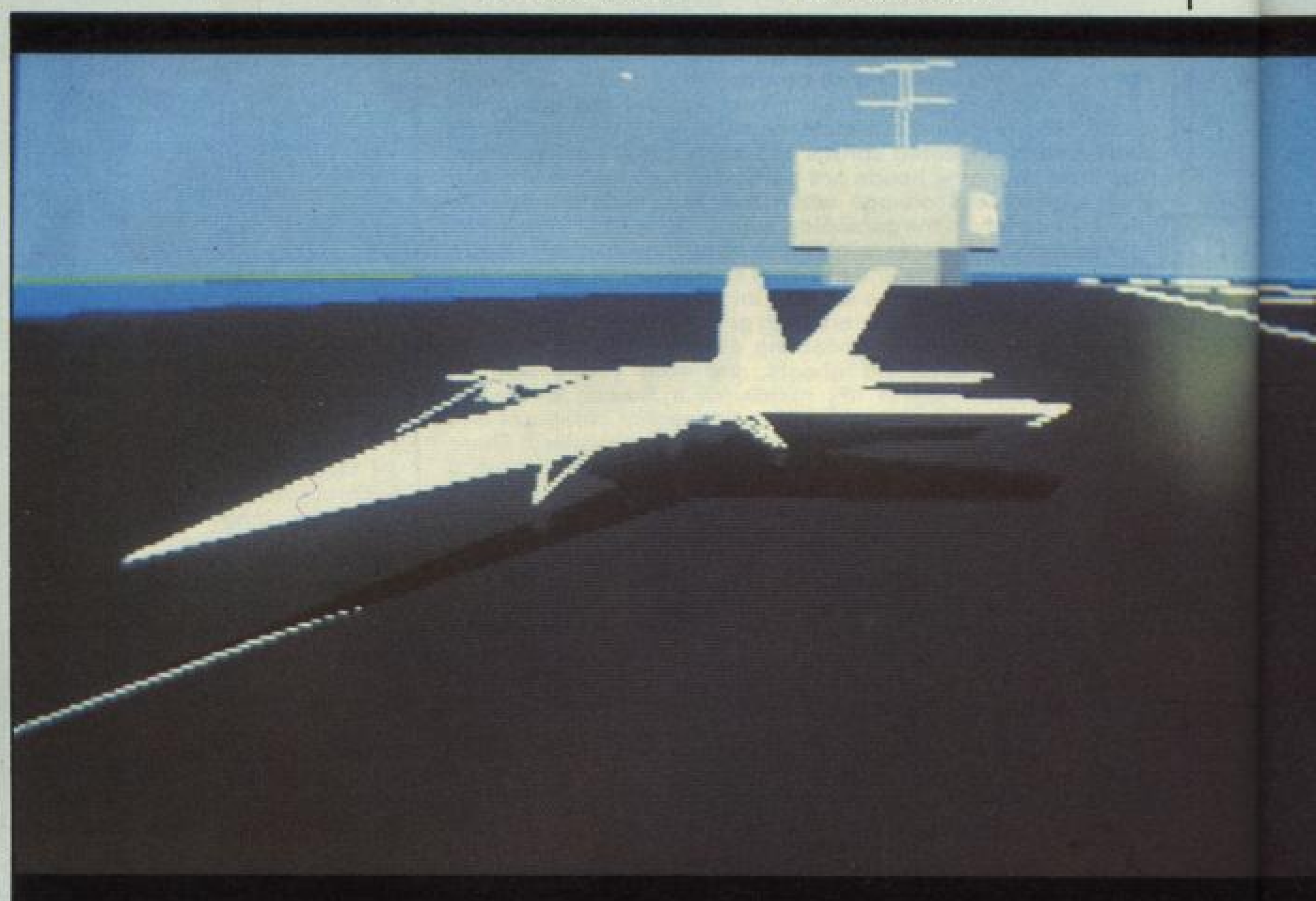
The jet's windows take up about 70% of the screen, with the pilot able to select forward, left or right-side views, or choose one of eight viewpoints outside the plane.

The combat is reputed to be extremely intensive, a claim consolidated by the wide variety of digitised jet weapons. *Interceptor* comes equipped with Sparrow radar-guided missiles, Sidewinder missiles and a Vulcan cannon that discharges up to 6000 rounds per minute. Cockpit controls show altitude, weapons status, radar, throttle speed and compass gauges.

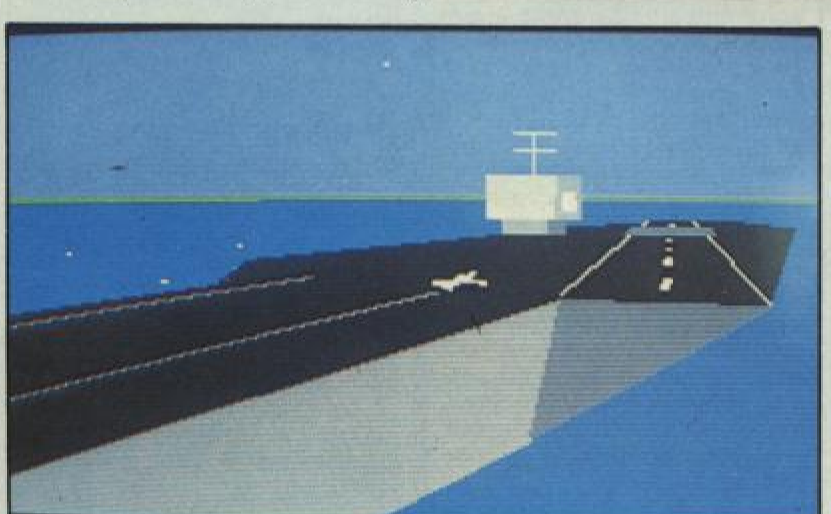
For the failures or the faint-hearted, the program offers an ejection sequence, which not only displays the parachute canopy overhead but also supports digitised effects of the wind whistling through the cords as the pilot slowly floats to earth!

Interceptor looks absolutely superb, and the 3D effect is nothing short of stunning. We'll keep you posted.

► **Prepare to take-off from the aircraft carrier in Electronic Arts' latest flight simulator**



► **Top Gun fans should recognise this triptych!**



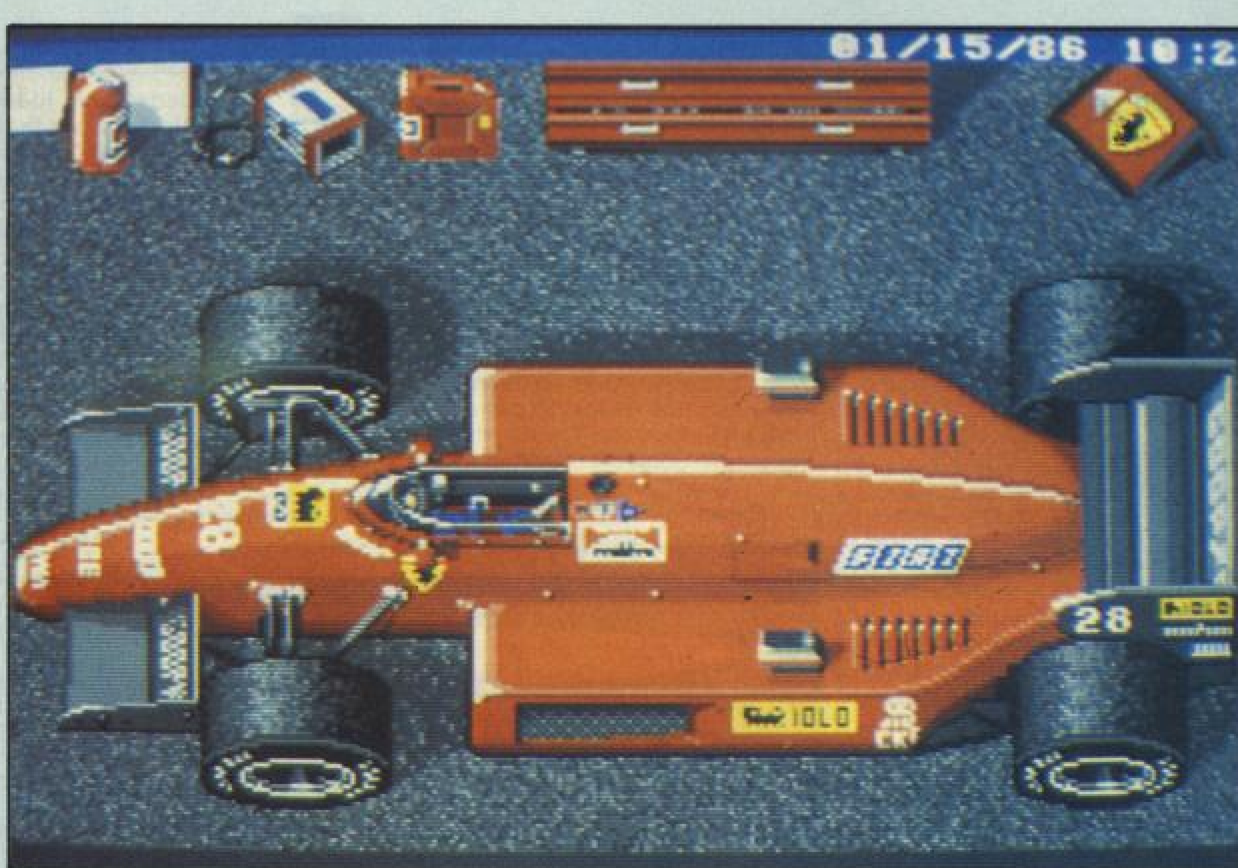


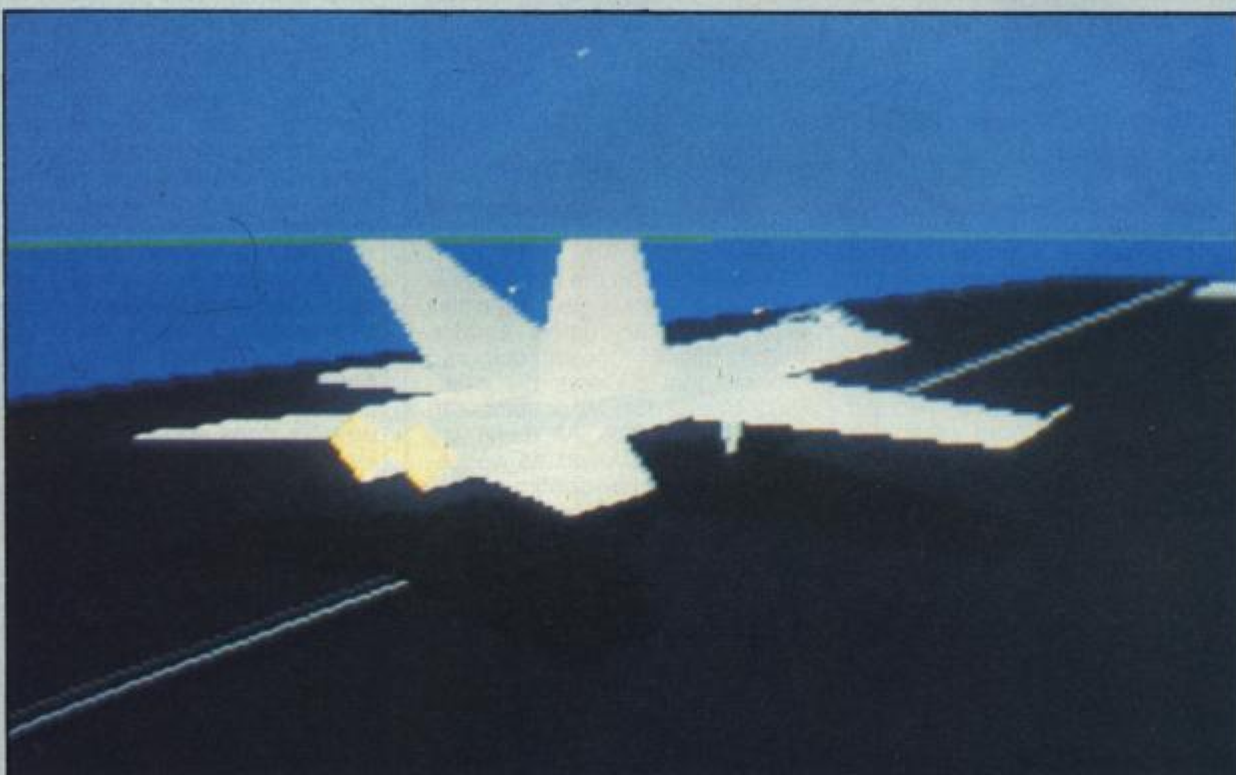
EA's second simulation is *Ferrari Formula One*, an accurate representation of an entire season on the international Grand Prix racing circuit.

Players drive a £250,000 Formula One race car on 16 of the world's most famous courses against seven of the world's best drivers. A full pit and garage facility allows drivers to tune the engine, try different fuel mixtures and alter the suspension, tyres, wings and gearing. The car's aerodynamics can be tested in a wind tunnel and adjusted if required. Once the player is satisfied with his customised version, a course lap is practised and the car altered again if necessary.

Racing is displayed in first person perspective 3D with the steering wheel and dashboard, at the bottom of the screen. Additional features include pit stops and wing mirrors which, coupled with appropriate sound effects, alert the player to the approach of a vehicle from behind.

Ferrari Formula One looks very promising, and there should be a full review next month.





▶ Out on the track, with a driver's-eye-view of the circuit and a faithful replica of the Ferrari's dashboard



▶ Incredible filled-in vector graphics and a wealth of missions make *Interceptor* one to watch out for

▶ Fantastic point-of-view shots take your breath away . . .





ROADWARS

Melbourne House £19.95 disk, joystick, mouse or keys

Late in the 24th century, the inhabitants of the planet Armageddon were forced to live on its surrounding moons due to world-wide nuclear holocaust. Now, early in the 25th century, the system is a tourist attraction; a museum piece and a testament to the folly of war.

Huge space roadways now link the moons to each other, but owing to a malfunction in the main computer, the defence systems have gone haywire. This is where the player comes in: seated in a battlesphere – a heavily armed and armoured war machine – the aim is to clear the roads and make them safe for the tourists to travel on.

Two such machines are sent on the mission, with the second sphere coming under computer control in the single-player mode. Each sphere is armed with twin lasers and can initiate shields, whereupon the sphere becomes totally enclosed.

Progress along the roadways is hampered by blue generator tiles which emit destructive sparks, laser-firing satellites and coloured spheres that traverse the roadways to explode on contact with the players' craft. All these are dodged or destroyed as necessary and the action continues until the roadways are cleared, or all the players' spheres are destroyed.

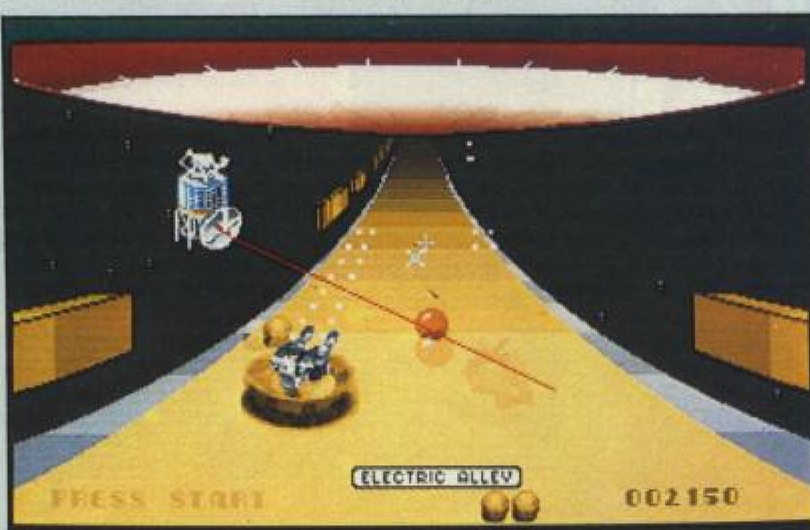


Although Roadwars **is a good conversion, it's only a moderately compulsive game. The 3D effect isn't outstanding – more competently effective – but the battlespheres themselves are pretty, looking like pencil drawings enhanced by neat animation. The track system, however, is made up of fundamental elements which are used over and over again, and although items such as barriers are added later, it is ultimately very repetitive. The sound is pretty feeble and the music nondescript, but at least they don't intrude too greatly on the action. It's fast, but the inconsistent control method aggravates: the frantic action is too often a result of poor sphere control rather than external danger. Details aside, there's a good deal of enjoyment to be had from the progress gained, and features such as the effective extra weapons assist in this. Basically, the lack of inter-level variety depreciates the enjoyment. If you like the arcade version, you'll like this; otherwise, test it first.**



Roadwars **is identical to its coin-op parent – and unfortunately that's where its faults lie. The arcade original's 'twist' joystick and two fire buttons have been crammed onto one joystick, and consequently the battlespheres handle very badly – trying to aim the gun and move at the same time is unbelievably difficult. I found the best way to play was to aim the gun at the side of the road just under the 'horizon', constantly fire the guns and avoid anything that gets through. Use the shield sparingly and it's easy to knock up a huge highscore. It's a shame that the gameplay and control method haven't been tweaked for home use – the two-player mode has plenty of competitive potential and the graphics and sound are both competent. As it stands,** Roadwars **is a polished, but badly flawed shoot 'em up.**

► **Based on the Arcadia coin-op, *Roadwars* features some stylish graphics, but fairly unrewarding gameplay**





I was never impressed with the 'arcade' version of Roadwars, **and this Amiga version doesn't improve on the theme. The roadway moves quite effectively and the battlespheres are neat (if a little lacking in frames of animation), but the constantly drab colour scheme tends to niggle after a while. The gameplay is *very* repetitive and no amount of smart graphics can overcome this fact. Simply blasting all the different items and dodging the occasional sphere isn't my idea of a good time. The situation is aggravated by the awkward control method: movement left and right, rotate lasers, open and close shields and fire are all accessed from the same joystick, making it rather fiddly at the best of times. If you discount the unusual backdrop and odd game style – and the novelty does soon wear off –** Roadwars **remains just a rather tricky, but fairly simple shoot 'em up.**

► **A true arcade-quality conversion: Melbourne House's *Roadwars***



PRESENTATION 60%
Simultaneous two-player option and attractive instruction packaging, but poor control method.

GRAPHICS 69%
Beautifully drawn sprites but disappointing and repetitive 3D effect. Blandly coloured throughout.

SOUND 53%
Inoffensive soundtrack complemented by average sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 58%
Initial lure is marred by the tricky control method and shallow gameplay.

LASTABILITY 45%
Repetitive action and lack of variety soon proves detrimental to lasting interest.

OVERALL 59%
A good conversion and a polished shoot 'em up which lacks spice.

THE WINNING ACCOLADE

Although Accolade have produced a string of impressive games, they're still very much an unknown quantity in the United Kingdom. ZZAP! takes a look at their brief, but bright history.

Accolade Inc was born in the December of 1984, when Alan Miller and Bob Whitehead, two of the founder members of Activision, once again joined forces.

Chairman and Chief Executive officer Alan Miller originally spent two years at Atari, where he designed several award-winning games and co-authored the operating systems for the Atari 400 and 800 machines. His time spent at Activision saw the designs of *Tennis* and *Ice Hockey*.

Robert Whitehead also designed games for Atari prior to joining Activision, where he was responsible for *Skiing* and *Chopper Command*.

Their first products under the Accolade banner were shipped out in the October of '85 and during the first ten months, Accolade released eight multiple format titles.

Accolade's first in-house production was *Hardball*, an impressive baseball simulation which was received to some acclaim in both America and Europe. To date, *Hardball* has sold in excess of 200,000 units.

Located in Cupertino, California, Accolade Inc now has 21 employees handling research, development, marketing administration and financial operations.

Accolade aims to produce high-quality entertainment software, and in order to maintain its self-imposed standards the company is reliant upon an internal development team headed by software veterans from throughout the industry. With their increased proliferation – Accolade products are distributed in no fewer then 29 countries and they aim to release 15 multiple-format products in 1988 – the company has also taken on the services of several independent design firms, which are provided with research, development resources and expertise in exchange for worldwide publishing rights on all their products, providing a fresh and different perspective to the game designs.

Following hot on the heels of their recent successes, *Apollo 18* and *The Train: Escape to Normandy*, Accolade are about to release *Card Sharks* and *Power at Sea*, both under the Electronic Arts logo. *Card Sharks* lets a solo player take part in a friendly game of Hearts, Blackjack or Poker, against a series of colourful, animated characters including Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Mikhail Gorbachev – all of whom play a pretty mean hand of seven card stud!

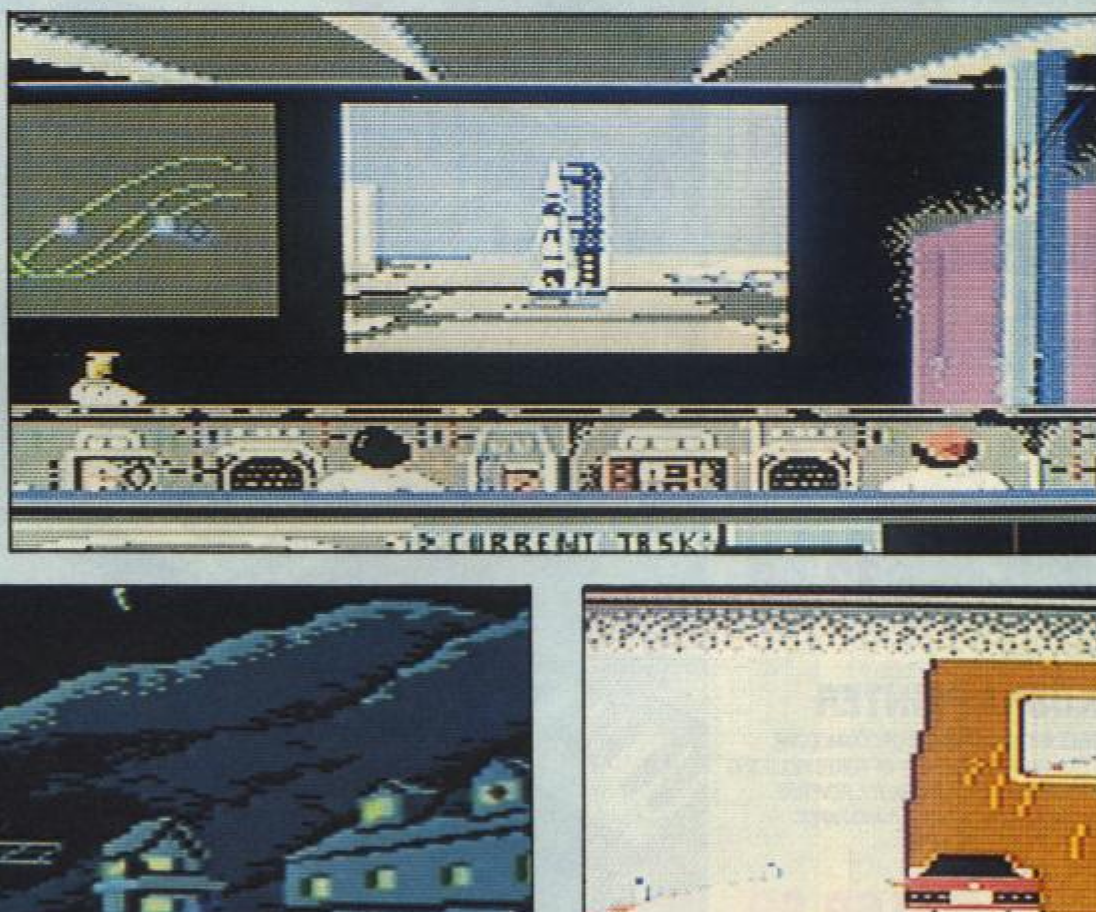
Power at Sea places the player at the helm of a US naval convoy about to embark on possibly the greatest naval battle of all time – the Battle for Leyte Gulf. As Commander of a battleship, a troop ship, an aircraft carrier, planes and troops, the player has to successfully co-ordinate his forces in order to defeat the Japanese destroyers and overcome their fortified beach-head stronghold.

Both products are finished and should get reviewed in the next issue of ZZAP!.

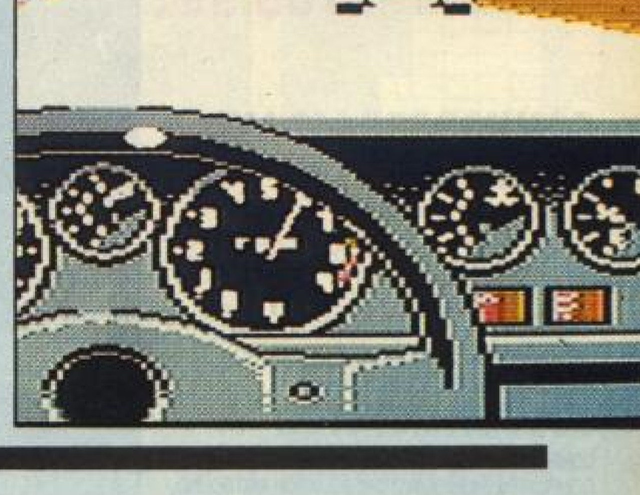
With respect to future releases, Accolade are quite secretive about up and coming titles, but hinted at another sports simulation and a sequel to one of their earlier releases!

ACCOLADE SOFTOGRAPHY

ACCOLADE'S COMICS	N/A
ACE OF ACES	88%
APOLLO 18	81%
4TH AND INCHES	90%
HARDBALL	93%
LAW OF THE WEST	78%
MINI PUTT	78%
PSI-5 TRADING COMPANY	88%
TEST DRIVE	46%
THE TRAIN	87%







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10



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ZZAP!



TIPS

I'm afraid this months tips section is slightly smaller than usual, but there's a valid excuse – next month there's an extra special . . .

GIANT PULL-OUT TIPS SUPPLEMENT

jam-packed with a superabundance of maps, POKEs, cheats, hints and tips. Work is already underway, and it looks like it's going to be something really special! Just make sure you don't miss it!

While I'm here, has anyone got any old Star Wars figures or models? If you have, and wouldn't mind parting with them for cash, drop me a line at the usual ZZAP! Tips address. Don't forget to tell me which models you've got, and include your name and address and phone number if possible.

THUNDERCATS (Elite)

POKEs of the feline kind, courtesy of that flat, smoked person – Kipperman. All you have to do is load the game, reset the computer and enter POKE 35088,173:SYS 2061 (RETURN) and an unlimited supply of Thundercats are yours for the taking. Easy!

RASTAN (Imagine)

If you're having problems with Imagine's latest arcade conversion, take heed of the advice sent in by Rastan expert Alan Sheriff of Withernsea, North Humberside. His comprehensive tips should help you to beat the malevolent sorcerer.

The initial stages shouldn't pose any problems whatsoever. Just take care when jumping over the stepping stones – the water is deadly – and hack down any creature stupid enough to get in your way.

The first real problem is encountered in the castle – the ropes. These swing in a set pattern, so just be patient and wait until the timing is right. To get on to the first rope, stand at the edge of the lava pit and Rastan grabs the rope automatically. You must be on the end of the rope to make any progress. The second rope takes precision timing, but once out of every five it swings a little further, and this is when you should time the jump. The third rope isn't very difficult.

When you come to the up/down spikes, walk under them and duck when they drop – they're pretty harmless. To dispose of the evil guardian at the end of the level, jump onto him and keep jumping up and down and thrusting up and down with your sword.

Onto the next level now. The rafts are the first problem, and to tackle these just jump if the next raft is coming towards you. If you do this you should cross safely.

When you come to the stone pillars in the river, wait until the second rock comes up just before the first, and then keep jumping across – and don't stop.

In the castle, if you don't do the jump from the rope properly you have to go down all the way down the steps to the bottom, or the rope disappears.

Deal with the up/down spikes as on the first level. The real problem comes with the javelins, which are avoided exactly like this: keep one hand on the space bar and time your passage between the spears, if it looks like you'll be stabbed, press space. The spears continue to move but Rastan is paused and can't be harmed. Once these are negotiated, go up the ladder at your leisure. By the way, you can't go straight up the rope because the second spear doesn't move unless you are level with it.

When you come to the bridge with the fireballs, just bob down and hack at them with your sword. The fireballs vanish. Do this to them all and you can get safely across.

Kill the second guardian as you did the first. When you try to kill anything be it snakes, Gigas, warriors or whatever, always duck as this stops them using their weapon. The only exception to this is the winged man, who is killed by doing a diagonal jump and swinging your sword at the last second. If you are confronted by bats follow the procedure for killing guardians. What are you waiting for? Go for it!

QUEDEX (Thalamus)

Gav from Bolton has found that if you select the 'Plane Designer' from the title screen and enter the Thalamus telephone number – 0735677261 – followed by 1, 2, 3 and so on, you can cheat on the relevant levels. Once you've selected a level, you must enter it otherwise the cheat won't work. By the way Gav, thanks for the POKEs – they're going to be used in next month's tips special!

TAI PAN (Ocean)

It's than Kipperman time of the month again. This time the happy hacker has come up with a POKE to swell your purse and its contents by an infinite amount – mmm! All you have to do is load the game as normal, and reset the computer so that you can enter POKE 4952,177:POKE 4980,177:SYS 2055 (RETURN) for an unlimited supply of cash.

BUGGY BOY (Elite)

Here's another Kipperman quickie, this time for Elite's fantastic arcade race game. Simply load the game, reset the computer and enter the following . . .

POKE 39945,96:POKE 2048,32 (RETURN)
POKE 2050, 13:POKE 2049, 104 (RETURN)
SYS 2048 (RETURN)

And you'll find that the clock is suspended, allowing you to finish every race without having to rush!

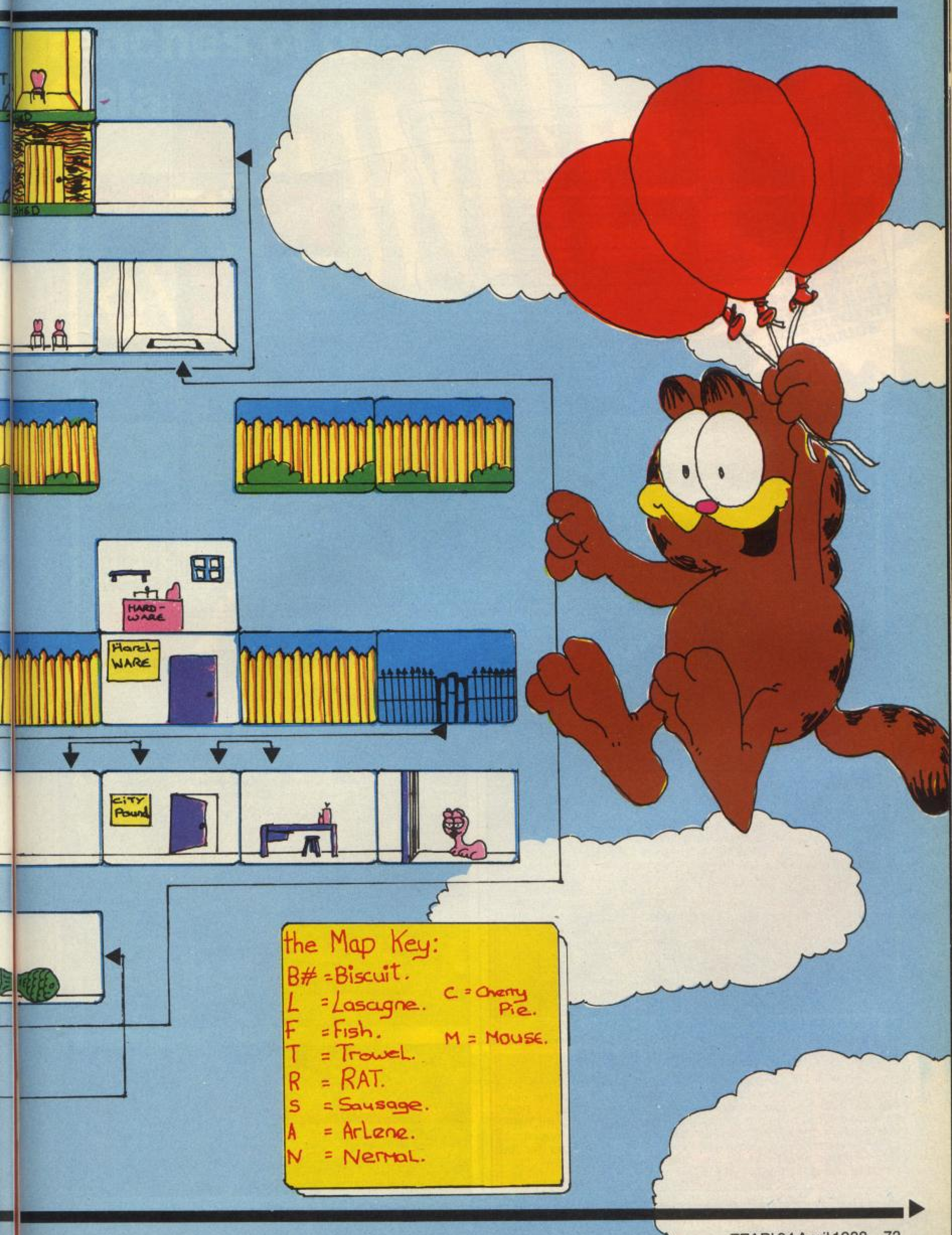
BANGKOK KNIGHTS (System 3)

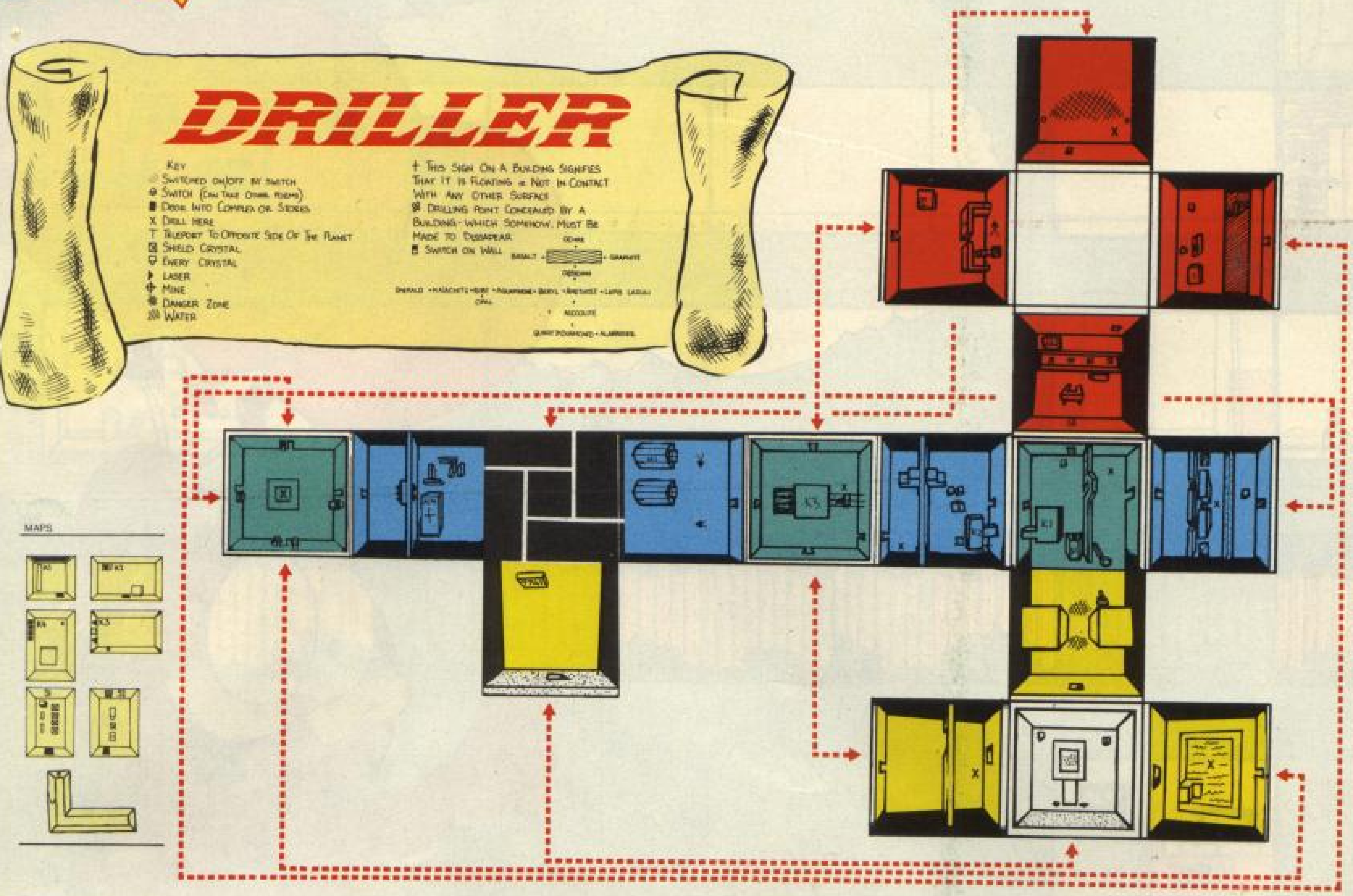
If System 3's whacky Thai beat 'em up is proving to be too much of a handful, take heed of the advice sent in by Paul Melounan of Farnham, in Surrey. His highly useful tips should put you onto the road to becoming a super-hard kick-boxing champ . . .

MANCHU MAN: To defeat Manchu man all you have to do is keep your distance and punch him. If he comes close, knee or shin kick him and he should back off, allowing you to finish him off with a few good punches. No problem, really.
DAN FISTS. All you have to do to this guy is punch and fly kick, and he hardly ever comes close. If, by some extraordinary quirk of fate, he does, back off quickly or he'll use his Ninja magic and put you out for good!
BAMBU MAN: This one usually stays quite far out, allowing some of the better kicks to be used. If he comes too close, just back off and knee him until he takes a couple of steps back, and carry on kicking him.
KILLA KALE: This old guffer is the hardest of the lot! Keep your distance and punch, throwing the odd kick for good measure. If he comes in close, back off – because once he starts kicking you're as good as dead. Just keep on your toes, and victory is yours.
SIAM SALLY: To beat this macho female into submission, just keep your distance and either use a combination of five punches to one kick, or five kicks to one punch. If you think that sounds odd, try it out for yourself and see if you win.
MUCHO MIKE: Just keep your distance and keep on kicking, and there shouldn't be too many problems. If he does wander (and you're pretty unlucky if he does) just punch or elbow him.
DADDY KALE: A bit of a toughie this one. Continually punch him, and try not to kick. If he comes in close watch out for his deadly headbutt.
BB BUTLER: Oddly enough, the last of the kick boxers is one of the easiest to beat – what an anticlimax! As soon as the bell goes, do a flying kick to head, then shin kick him until his energy is very low, and finally polish him off with a couple of punches. After that, stare aghast at the rubbish ending screen and saunter off and make a cup of tea . . .



Garfield


SHED
HARD-WARE
Hard-WARE
CiTY Pound
the Map Key:
B# = Biscuit.
L = Lasagne.
F = Fish.
T = Trowel.
R = RAT.
S = Sausage.
A = ArLene.
N = NerMaL.
C = Cherry Pie.
M = MOUSE.



GARFIELD (The Edge)

An anonymous person from Brighton-by-Sea has solved this somewhat disappointing officially licensed arcade adventure with the greatest of ease. If you use the following solution in conjunction with the map, you shouldn't have any problems in rescuing Arlene.

First of all get the aniseed balls (which make Odie follow you). Go to the back door, where there's a bone. Pick it up and put it to the left by the door. Odie now opens the cat flap, allowing you free access to the rest of the locations. Go and get the lamp and find Nermal. Give him a good kick and pick up the clockwork mouse. Go to the health food shop and drop the mouse next to the man. A 'Donut' magically appears, which should be picked up – and be careful NOT to eat it.

Go to the giant oscillating rat, drop the donut and it runs off. Kick open the chest and get the key that's contained within. Return to the starting location and drop the key. Get the trowel, walk to the hardware shop, and use it by the man. A dollar appears from nowhere, which should be collected. Return to the health food shop, use the dollar next to the man and get the bird seed. Take this to the right hand side of the park, drop it and a bird flies by. Leave the bird and go and get the key. Return to the park and jump on the bird (don't drop the key) and it drops you in the City Pound. Enter and walk right into the cell and Arlene is rescued. Garfield can now live happily ever after . . .

OUT RUN (US Gold)

Here are some pretty loony POKEs from Marcel vd Wel, of 4207 Ea Gorinchem, Holland to squeeze a few more minutes of play out of this huge-selling arcade conversion.

First of all load the game, and when the title screen appears reset the computer so that you can enter the following . . .

```
POKE 34711,234 (RETURN)
POKE 34712,234 (RETURN)
POKE 34713,234 (RETURN)
```

To keep the timer between 70 and 80 seconds. If you want to play more levels and really boost your score, just enter . . .

```
POKE 37198,(1-255) (RETURN)
```

Where 1-255 is the number of levels you want to tackle before the finish line appears. If you want to set the starting level, try entering these . . .

```
POKE 37188,(0-255) (RETURN)
POKE 34320,234 (RETURN)
POKE 34321,234 (RETURN)
POKE 34322,234 (RETURN)
```

And you can even remove the road colours (which looks much better) with . . .

```
POKE 33393,173 (RETURN)
```

Once you've made your changes, restart the action by typing SYS 38045 (RETURN). Happy racing.

CRAZY COMETS (Ricochet)

Simon Nichol's forerunner to Mega Apocalypse has just been re-released on Mastertronic's Ricochet label, but since it has a new loader, the old infinite lives POKEs don't work. However, that prolific POKEster Kipper-man of sunny, sunny Clwyd has come up trumps with these. Just load the game, reset the computer and type POKE 40522,189:SYS 24882 (RETURN) and an unlimited supply of spaceships are yours for the taking

That's yer lot for this month. Congratulations to Alan Sheriff of Withernsea – he wins this month's grand prize of a £30 SOFTWARE VOUCHER for his great Rastan tips.

If you've got any hints, tips, cheat modes, listings, POKEs maps – or anything else you think might be of use to a games player – write in to me at ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. If your tips are really good, you could well find a £30 software voucher winging its way to you . . .

See you in next month's huge mega-tips special.



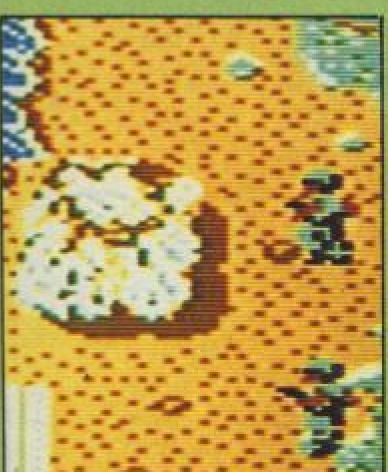
WIN A DAY OUT AT THE LANDROVER JUNGLE TRACK



COURTESY OF ELITE



ZZAP! COMP



Following the enthusiastic accolade awarded to *Ikari Warriors* (89% last issue), ZZAP! and Elite have gathered together to produce this fabulous competition. On offer to three fortunate readers is a great day out at Land Rover for some pulse-pounding driving action across their hazardous 'jungle track' terrain, plus a copy of the great arcade conversion and a T-shirt thrown in. Thirty runners-up will each receive a copy of the game and a special T-shirt.

Are you sitting comfortably? Then all you have to do is this: we want you to design a multi-terrain vehicle. It can be something inspired by contemporary machines or some fantastic creation embellished with a wealth of customisations suitable for alien landscapes. Whichever you choose, it'll need to be practical enough to tackle the wide scope of earthly and otherworldly territories it might encounter. There's only one condition of entry: you must be *at least 14 years of age* by the time the great day out arrives (for insurance purposes!).

Designs must be sent to us at:

A LAND ROVER COMPETITION,
ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10,
LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB,

to arrive no later than April 8th, 1988.

As ever, our expert panel of judges will decide the winners on merit of design rather than simply on artistic talent – remember, it's the thought that counts!




From beyond
your
darkest dreams



"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my Soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my Soul to take ..."



Frightmare – A computer game for the Commodore 64, Spectrum, Amstrad and soon on the IBM PC. Cassette £9.95. Disk £14.95 (IBM £19.95).

Cascade Games Ltd., 1–3 Haywra Crescent, Harrogate, N. Yorks. Tel: 0423 525325. Fax: 0423 530054.

ZZAP! TEST

BLOCKBUSTERS

TV Games, £7.95 cass, £12.95 disk, keyboard only

Invite Bob Holness into your home as Domark bring the cult teenage quiz to your 64 for a second time.

Blockbusters is a word game played by two human players or a human and computer player, where each contestant attempts to connect opposite sides of a grid of hexagons bearing letters.

Players select a letter and are asked a general knowledge question, the answer to which begins with the chosen letter. Correct answers are rewarded with that hexagon being captured and used as a link in the successful contestant's chain. The winner of each game is the first contestant to link his two sides of the board, and the winner of two games out of three takes part in the Gold Run. Here, the single letters are replaced by acronyms of phrases or sayings which are identified to gain hexagons. Successfully connecting opposite sides of the grid is rewarded by being nominated a Blockbusters champion.

As well as being a possible contestant, the computer takes the role of the quiz-master, Bob Holness and selects and asks questions, checks the players' typed answers and even animates a pic-



After a brief appearance some time ago, a revamped version of Blockbusters **is now available. I'm quite keen on quizzes, and the competitive edge created by the button-pressing is quite addictive. There are some annoying delays as the program selects each question, and this is especially aggravating during a Gold Run (which, incidentally, helps you to brush up on your speed typing). My only reservation about** Blockbusters **(as with most quiz games) is the limited number of questions: a few plays can eat up a good chunk of the questions, and once you're familiar with most of them, the games's appeal dies fairly swiftly.**



I approached Blockbusters **with some trepidation, because although I like quiz games, very few of them have a sufficiently versatile answer-checking routine: you type in an answer merely to find that the computer only accepts one version of the required response; an effectively correct answer is deemed incorrect. Although the attempt made by** Blockbusters **to overcome this problem isn't totally successful, I still enjoyed the time I spent playing it, probably because of the humour generated by the wobbling Holness head and the feeling that I was taking part in a very tongue-in-cheek version of the programme. The one-player game isn't so good though, and if I was really desperate to play** Blockbusters **with a friend it would probably be cheaper and just as much fun to buy some of the** Blockbuster **quiz books.**



Quiz games aren't widespread on the 64, but those that do exist are more usefully translated than this: Powerplay **is a particularly good example of how the basic genre can be innovatively converted.** Blockbusters **is all right, but there isn't that much to it apart from the multitude of questions. The gameplay sports some faults however: the computer opponent attempts some ridiculous routes across the board, and the Gold Run is a bit silly because the clock doesn't stop as you type the answer: slow typists beware! The only reward on offer is the sense of satisfaction gained, and this soon becomes too familiar to warrant prolonged play. Nonetheless, the two-player mode saves it from disgrace and provides plenty of long-term entertainment.**



► The digitised Bob has as much personality as the real thing . .

SKYFOX II

Electronic Arts, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

The Xenomorphs, those fiendish aliens who tried to obliterate our colonies in *Skyfox*, are planning another galactic conquest. Before, they were beaten by the incredible Skyfox warplane; this time our hopes ride on the new Skyfox warpfighter.

The defence of liberty starts with the player seated at the Federation Computer, with options to select one of the six difficulty levels, show plans of the Skyfox, select a mission and its description or play it. There are ten missions, ranging from simple 'destroy all hostiles' sorties, to seeking out the legendary Starbase Boondockia.

The Skyfox is launched into the void, with the screen giving a 3D view of space with a Head Up Display (HUD) above the instrument panel. A central radar monitor shows incoming craft, and also displays fore and aft views. Levels of energy, shield strength and damage are represented by three bar graphs all of which are affected by Xenomorph hits. The panel also displays current speed, autopilot status, target identification and weapons status.

As well as a neutron disruptor, targetted via the HUD, the Skyfox carries a complement of rear-launched antimatter mines and guided photon pulse bombs for



Skyfox II has all the potential for a great game, but is spoiled by a couple of irritating features. The presentation is superb: there are a host of clearly described missions, evaluations on performance and a very effective screen display. Graphically it's good, but lacking in variety: the 3D effect of asteroids, starbases and alien craft is particularly striking at high speeds. The sound is a little disappointing, though, consisting of a dull engine roar and feeble effects. More seriously, there are periods in the game when there seems very little to do apart from avoid asteroids and wander about. The main fault is that the missions themselves are varied, but the game elements are not: it requires a good deal of perseverence to get into, and I'm not convinced that the gameplay deserves it.



I was immediately grabbed by the lovely presentation of Starfox II, **with its wealth of missions and superb bas-relief option screens and accompanying graphics. Unfortunately, the mission scenarios, although sounding quite interesting, are all fairly simple in essence, and rely upon lots of flying around and blasting things. Admittedly, this is done extremely well with some very fast and smooth graphic update on enemy ships and asteroids, but there's a limit to the amount of fun to be had in repetitive wanton destruction, no matter how well presented. The action is also spoiled by the lack of manoeuvrability afforded the 'fox, and the rather confusing radar screen, both of which conspire to reduce the overall feeling of moving in 3D space. Entertaining but hardly essential.**

► The mission summary is accompanied by some pleasant static graphics



ture of Bob's face in the corner of the screen!

A solo player competes against the clock, while two-player mode supports separate 'buzzers' for each contestant, giving them the chance to beat their opponent to the answer, or even interrupt Bob if the question is anticipated.

PRESENTATION 78%
Good screen layout and useful options, but a slightly flawed answer check.

GRAPHICS 56%
Comical Bob Holness graphic, with functional board display.

SOUND 41%
Buzzers and a reasonable rendition of the between-rounds jingle.

HOOKABILITY 71%
Interesting to play and easy enough to get into.

LASTABILITY 60%
Hundreds of questions, but they're repeated during the early games.

OVERALL 62%
An above-average quiz game which follows the programme closely enough to appeal to its fans. It's probably best used as a family game.

the destruction of enemy starbases.

Once a mission has ended – either successfully or otherwise – the mission is evaluated and a resumé of the player's progress is presented.

PRESENTATION 87%
Excellent base computer and ten missions to complete at any of five skill levels. Disk multiload is slow.

GRAPHICS 72%
Well-drawn computer screens and reasonably convincing 3D movement of stars, ships and asteroids.

SOUND 57%
The title tune isn't bad, but the effects are unremarkable.

HOOKABILITY 65%
At least one of the missions is bound to appeal, although the action isn't as exciting as first expected.

LASTABILITY 61%
The sporadic and often repetitive gameplay proves to be its undoing.

OVERALL 67%
Not a terrible effort, but unlikely to make the same impact as its predecessor did in 1985.

MANDROID

CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

Defecting agent Chris Auker has stolen the Mandroid designs and fled to Cove 4 in order to contact the notorious criminal mastermind, Max. It's the player's task to hunt down Auker, gain information as to the whereabouts of the evil overlord, and hence find the valuable blueprints.

The Mandroid agent is directed either on foot or with the assistance of a remote vehicle. This craft is impervious to most enemy fire, but is destroyed on contact with any of the industrial waste rivers which border the landscape. The craft also uses up energy, but is refuelled from depots which are found scattered around the landscape.



Following in the clanking footsteps of the chronically bugged Cyborg, **comes its sequel,** Mandroid. **The game is fairly similar in style to its predecessor, but surprisingly it's actually worse: the scrolling is jerkier (heaven knows why), the animation and sprites are poorer (ditto) and the presentation is just as lacking. The background graphics are of a reasonable standard, but they lack variety and interesting detail. The gameplay is moderately appealing but its implementation leaves a lot to be desired: poor collision detection, bugs (such as the inability to move in certain rooms), the annoying reincarnation of enemy men when re-entering locations, the insistence of relying on the keyboard to access secondary functions, a finicky and uncomfortable control method . . . In fact, it suffers in much the same way that** Cyborg **did – obviously CRL haven't learned by their mistakes.**

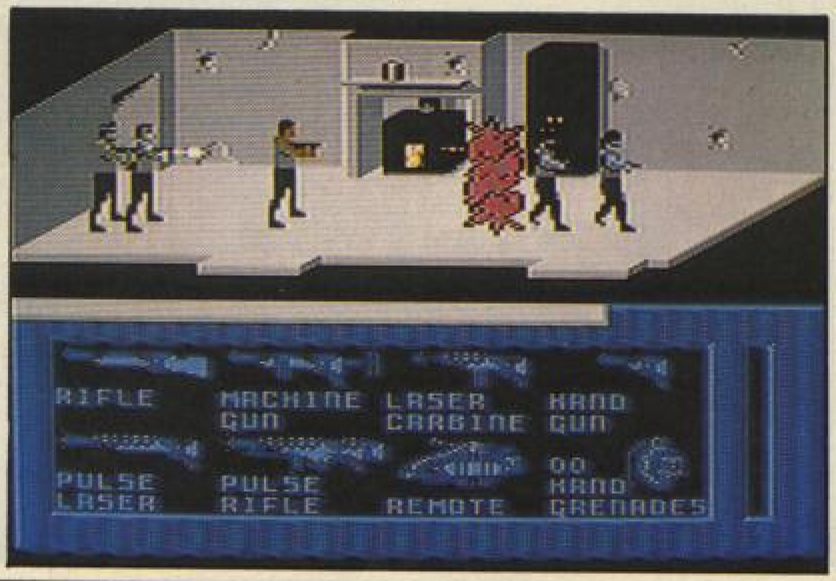


What at first sight may appear like a good game design has unfortunately been transformed into a pretty poor program courtesy of the Zen Room. There would seem to be much room for variety in Mandroid, **what with hover-cars to drive, fruit machines to play, cash dispensers to fiddle with, loads of powerful weapons to find and lots of alien types to interact with, but sadly they're all so badly implemented that playing the game is a real pain. The minimal instructions don't help at all, missing out any description of how to use the displays to best advantage (although from the look of some of them, they don't merit the effort spent on trying anyway). The pace of the game is another let-down: the mandroid lopes around in slow motion while the background jerks past behind him – incredible, considering the small area of the screen being moved. Other little idiosyncrasies, such as the inability to shoot up or down the screen, give the game that smack of unprofessionalism which would leave it stuck permanently on my software shelf.**

The screen is split between a large information panel and the playing area, which scrolls horizontally. Movement in and out of the landscape is achieved by passing through 'transportation gateways', whereupon the screen flicks to a new location.

Money is necessary for success, and is acquired by gambling or accessing any of the credit dispensers found within the city.

▶ **CRL's cyborg is on the loose again in *Mandroid***



Extra weapons become available when sufficient funds are obtained.

Different characters are encountered along the way, both inside buildings and in the streets, and the player communicates by accessing a commands menu. Many characters carry map information vital to the success of the mission, and are eliminated with weapons or by simply ploughing into them with the remote. The deceased occasionally drop their guns which are then added to the player's armoury.

Side two of the cassette contains the Mandroid library file which reveals information about the nature of the mission and displays individual portraits of the characters involved.



The presentation on Mandroid **is extremely weak: the scrolling is slow and jerky, the playing area is annoyingly small, collision detection is at fault, the control method is awkward and the stupid enemies shoot walls instead of you. The Mandroid files on side two are a good idea, but the graphics are so blocky and bland that the characters are virtually indistinguishable. The game itself is also graphically lacking: the backdrops are bland and repetitive, the characters are very poor and the main sprite is badly animated and unconvincing. The gameplay is pretty tedious: it *is* quite satisfying seeing an enemy dissolve in a splat of blood, but most of them could hardly be classed as threatening or intelligent. A clumsy, slow and unprofessional game with hopelessly limited appeal.**

PRESENTATION 27%
Extremely lacking (and seemingly standard) CRL documentation. Tiny screen display and an uncomfortable and unwieldy control method.

GRAPHICS 39%
Sombre, dull and indistinct with infantile sprites and poorly detailed backgrounds.

SOUND 34%
Standard title track and merely functional in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 29%
Poor presentation and little variety repel any addictiveness.

LASTABILITY 18%
Annoying and repetitive gameplay make completing the task a difficult chore.

OVERALL 25%
A tedious and badly crafted sequel which fails to improve upon its predecessor.

DAN DARE II

Virgin Games £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

It's over a year since the Mekon's last attack on planet Earth, when his nemesis, Colonel Dan Dare, managed to thwart his dastardly plans and deflect the large asteroid he fired at our planet. Now the warped green genius has a much more sinister plan in mind: to create a race of Supertreens with which he can dominate the Earth.

The player starts with the choice of either controlling Dan or the Mekon. Dan's mission is to infiltrate the Mekon's flick-screen spaceship, find the Supertreens cocooned in their plexiglass bubbles and destroy their life-support systems before the level destruct sequence sends them to Earth.

To do this Dan shoots the control box on each life support bubble. The hero has 10 Mekonian minutes to destroy them all and the timer starts as soon as the first Supertreen is destroyed. When all the Supertreens are killed, Dan makes his way to the blast doors, where he sits safely while the spaceship explodes. Failure to reach the blast doors in time, or not destroying all the Supertreens results in the mission being aborted, and the game ends. If the objective is successfully completed, Dan moves onto the next, more difficult level.

Throughout the mission, Dan is beset by the Mekon and his henchmen, who fire on the hapless hero. Accurate hits remove Dan's energy, represented as a diminish-

► Time waits for no Dan, in this Virgin sequel



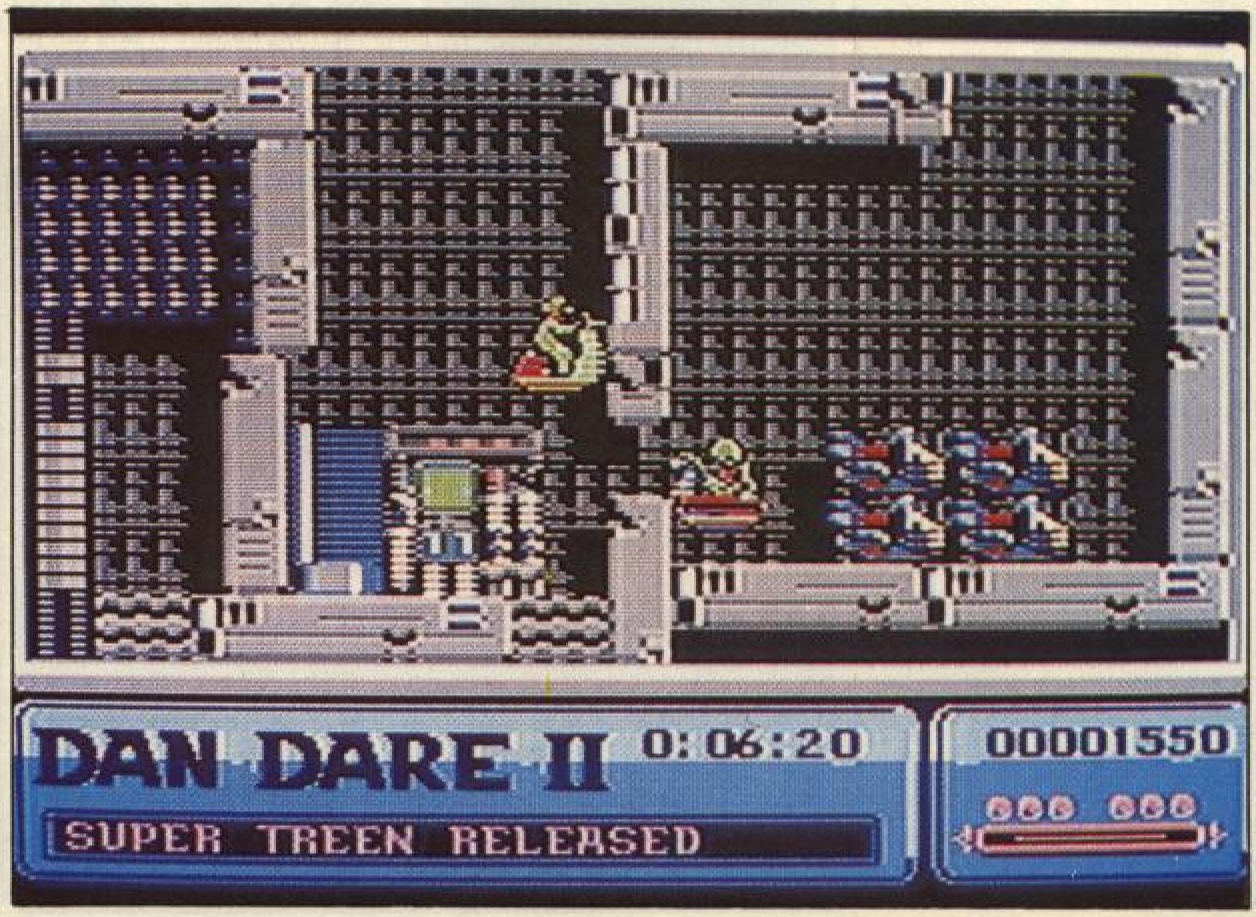


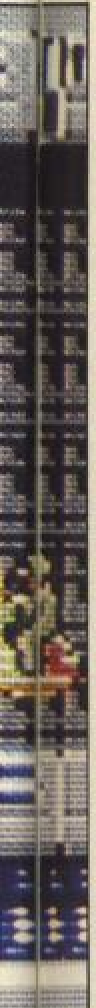
► Desperate, Dan destroys another set of Super Treens



That role model of a hero, Dan Dare, is back again to thwart the evil Mekon's plans. I must admit that my initial feelings were of trepidation – after all, the original Dan Dare is a hard act to follow. Fortunately my doubts were soon dispelled – Dan Dare II is a worthy sequel, and a very good game in its own right. Although the game is essentially a shoot 'em up, cartography is very necessary – the timer is very tight, and there's very little margin for error when it comes to killing all the Supertreens and getting Dan safely behind the blast doors. The graphics are first class, and the small, but beautifully detailed sprites and superb backdrops successfully capture the flavour of the original comic strip. Sadly, the sound is lacking, with a few weak effects that sound exactly like the ones in Strangeloop. Still, Dan Dare II is immense fun to play, and although there are only four levels to conquer, should provide plenty of hectic blasting.

▼ Cameron the Mekon frees one of his green chums







Dan Dare was very impressive because it superbly converted the comic strip to computer format, with its powerful sense of interaction. Dan Dare II abandons this originality for a more standard shoot 'em up, albeit with an unusual control method. However, the derivative mould doesn't detract from its quality, and several factors help to discriminate it from the rest. Firstly, the graphical detail: the explosions, heartbeats and pulsing heads of the Supertreens generate a brilliant atmosphere, and the precision and colour in the sprites and backdrops is nothing short of amazing. Secondly, the time limit renders every game menacing, even with a predetermined route; without one, it's hopeless. Dan's mission also allows you time to wander around making a map, which is essential. My only reservation is about the lastability – the appeal wanes after you've completed both objectives. However, until then there's a wealth of puzzles, some neat surprises and plenty of furious gameplay all wrapped up in excellent presentation. Whether or not you like the original, take a look at this.

ing bar which shrinks towards a fatal zero. Dan has only six lives with which to complete the task.



► A Dan's gotta do what a Dan's gotta do



The graphic implementation of Dan Dare II puts many similar games to shame: if you ever wondered just what was capable with only 16 colours on-screen, take a look at this! The backdrops and sprites are absolutely fabulous; practically flawless. The gameplay isn't the most innovative in the world, but the action is hectic enough to make you want to keep coming back. In fact the intensity of the gameplay seems to create an enforced hyperactivity: you always feel as if you've got only seconds to complete the mission, and I defy anyone to play for half an hour or so and not come away feeling totally exhausted! The rather limited gameplay is partially excused by the lower price tag, and although some people may find it too shallow, action freaks and mappers are more than catered for here.

► Daring Dan dawdles around the Mekon's spacecraft



If the player is in an evil frame of mind, he can take control of the Mekon, in which case the objective is to manually activate the Supertreens' life control panels and eject them into space, thus enabling them to wreak havoc on Earth. That all-round good guy, Dan, has set the destruct timer, so the task is completed in 10 Mekonian minutes for the Mekon to succeed and move onto the next level. In similar fashion to the alternate scenario, Dan's chums attempt to stop the Mekon from completing his task, and their lasers are avoided to keep the evil one healthy.

PRESENTATION 79%
Good instructions. Choice to play either Dan or the Mekon is a nice feature.

GRAPHICS 92%
Small, but wonderfully neat sprites move smoothly around beautifully detailed and solid-looking backdrops.

SOUND 31%
Unimpressive blasting effects.

HOOKABILITY 91%
The frenetic action is very entertaining, and the progressive urge soon takes over.

LASTABILITY 60%
Once the game is completed, interest wanes.

OVERALL 83%
A pulse-racingly good shoot 'n' search game, but possibly just a little short on lasting interest.



SAMURAI WARRIOR
THE BATTLE OF.... USAGI YOJIMBO
I AM USAGI YOJIMBO, RONIN SAMURAI AND BODYGUARD. GUIDE ME THROUGH THE DANGEROUS LANDS OF FEUDAL JAPAN AS I SEEK REVENGE ON THAT TREACHEROUS SCUM HIKIJI. AN EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN BATTLE, SO STAY ALERT HONOURABLE FRIEND, ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN NEXT THE ENEMY WILL STRIKE.
THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI IS LONG AND HARD
COMMODORE SCREEN SHOTS
LOOK OUT FOR SAMURAI WARRIOR ON COMMODORE 64, CASSETTE £8.95, AND DISC £14.95.
THIS COMPULSIVE GAME IS ALSO AVAILABLE BY MAIL ORDER. PLEASE SEND YOUR ORDER AND REMITTANCE (CHEQUES PAYABLE TO BRITISH TELECOM PLC. FOR DIRECT DEBIT FROM ACCESS/VISA CARD PLEASE STATE CARD NUMBER AND EXPIRY DATE) TO: THE MARKETING DEPT, TELECOM SOFT, FIRST FLOOR 64~76 NEW OXFORD STREET, LONDON WC1A 1PS
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MAGNETRON

Firebird, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Planet Quartech is being menaced by eight droid-controlled satellites, and the player's KLP-2 droid has been assigned to disable each one by shutting down or overloading their reactors.

The action is displayed in 3D isometric style with each satellite consisting of a network of flick-screen landscapes. These comprise six basic elements: flat squares, magnets, ramps, teleports, computer access ports and reactor areas.

Computer access ports reveal three icons: sphere, droid and box. The sphere icon displays the satellite reactor status, showing their relative charge if stable; the droid reveals the KLP-2's current status and its components, and box shows data sheets on weapons and devices, but only when the required security class is held.

Reactors consist of four containers, each holding a fuel rod (positive) or an inhibitor (negative). Either component can be removed and replaced by the rod currently held by the droid; if KLP-2 isn't carrying a rod, the gauge registers zero. A reactor is disabled by decreasing its total charge to below one, shutting it down, or increasing it to above five, which overloads the system. Either extreme destabilises it, and once all four are disabled the satellite itself shuts down. Teleports are then activated allowing access to the remaining satellites.

The reactors are guarded by 16 types of droid which are destroyed or grappled with. Grappling transfers all the abilities of the dismantled droid to the KLP-2. If this improved droid is deactivated, the last shell is reinhabited, and the mission continues. Once this shell is destroyed, however, the game ends.

Grappling involves aligning three sets of three icons within a time limit, which varies according to the relative strengths of the two droids involved. If successful, transfer of the enemy droid's components is initiated. If unsuccessful, a detonator is activated, destroying the shell.

KLP-2's movement is affected by the charges it picks up from the reactors. At the bottom left of the control panel the combined weight of droid and rods is indicated; if the droid is too heavy, ramps are tougher to climb and steering is more awkward. Magnets (displayed as arrows) respond to whether the droid is positively or negatively charged, assisting or hindering progress respectively. The charge is continually displayed in the bottom right of the screen display.

Landscapes increase in difficulty and droids grow more powerful as the satellites are cleared. Once the series of eight has been shut down, another cluster appears, with an increased number of more aggressive droids.



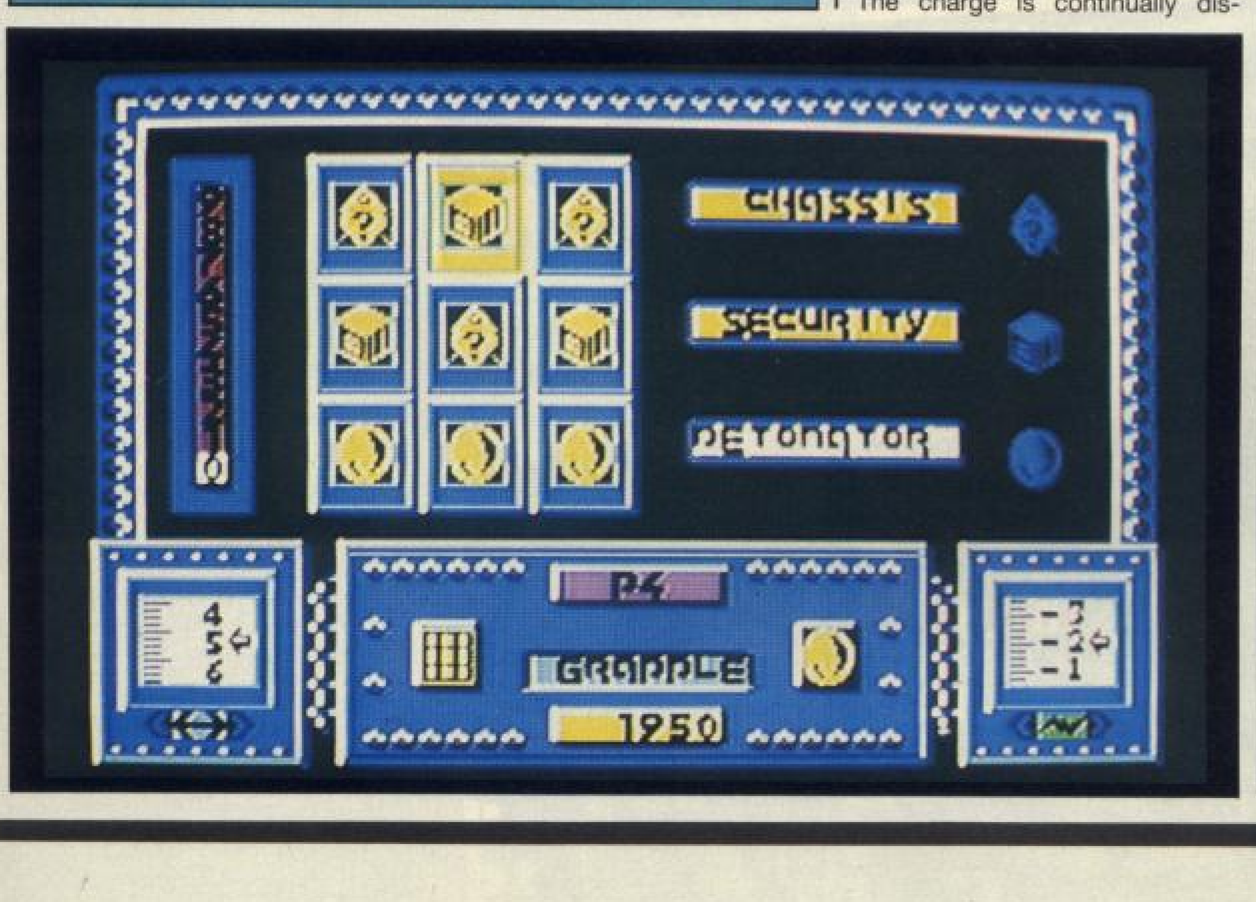
Why Graftgold have decided to squander their talent producing this poor Paradroid derivative is a mystery to me, especially as Paradroid is such a perfect program. The graphics are surprisingly poor, and fail to spark any sort of atmosphere. The robot sprites lack detail and definition, and in some places the use of colour is very gaudy indeed, making the game unattractive to the eye. The very high difficulty level is immediately offputting – the first couple of games are frustratingly short, and it takes quite a while to get the hang of things. Each level is relatively small, and once you're proficient at the transfer game, I don't think it'll take long to go through all eight. Magnetron is a great disappointment. If you want a Paradroid game, you might as well buy the real thing – it's prettier, plays better, is more varied and is much cheaper.



Take the Spectrum game Quazatron, add a good dose of Paradroid and some derivative sub-games, and voila! Magnetron appears. This flick-screen, 3D version of the Braybrook classic is very nicely executed, and is as entertaining as its predecessor(s) to play. Unfortunately, the factors that make it playable also provide the very reason for not buying it: if you've got Paradroid, you won't need this; if you haven't got Paradroid, it stands a good chance you don't like this style of game anyway. The level of imitation even descends to the Paradroid character set and Michael Winterberg-style soundtrack which is very reminiscent of earlier Graftgold pieces, containing déja vu snatches of Morpheus and Ranarama. The occasional jingles do little to emphasise the atmosphere and become increasingly intrusive as play progresses. When all's said and done, Magnetron *is* a good game and carries a decent price tag, but comes recommended only for newcomers to the genre.



Despite the altered scenario, this is very much the ageing classic Paradroid turned on its side. This familiar gameplay conspires with the lack of graphical and aural difference to create a playable but ultimately unsatisfying game. Graphically it's just been upgraded to 3D, with some neat, solid-looking landscapes and an impressive three-layer parallax starfield. Unfortunately, it falls into an uninspiring middle ground between sombre menace and appealing colour. In this respect the sound is equally lacking: the robotic effects are good but fail to be great, and the spot tunes tend to detract from the atmosphere and become quickly annoying. As always from Graftgold, the presentation is excellent, with a nuts 'n' bolts screen display and great attention to detail throughout. Nonetheless, the lack of diversity soon becomes apparent: the same screens reappear, the sub-games, although initially compelling, are unsophisticated, and the lack of atmosphere reduces it to tedium. As it stands, Magnetron is good . . . but not *that* good.



PRESENTATION 84%
Comprehensive instructions, neat range of options and informative screen display.

GRAPHICS 70%
Convincing, although frequently drab, backdrops. The sprites are less effective, however, and the 3D movement occasionally flawed.

SOUND 56%
Paradroid-like noises and some annoying jingles.

HOOKABILITY 71%
Difficult from the outset, and gets harder.

LASTABILITY 51%
The lack of graphical variety and repetition of tasks quickly dampen the fun.

OVERALL 67%
A beautifully presented game marred by its derivative gameplay and lack of diversity.

ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

STRIKE FLEET

Electronic Arts, £14.95 disk only, joystick with keys

●Lucasfilm's absorbing simulation of contemporary naval warfare

Why control just one simulated warship when you can steer a whole fleet through combat scenarios in four of the world's hottest naval conflict zones? This is exactly what's on offer in Lucasfilm's *Strike Fleet*.

From an initial mission selection screen, the prospective *Strike Fleet* Commander is offered ten varied scenarios, each accompanied on-screen by a map and some descriptive text. Take on the Soviet fleet of ships, subs and Backfire bombers in the Mid Atlantic or Arctic Ocean, or defend the Falkland Islands from the encroaching Argentinian navy. Even more topically, a convoy of empty tankers can be guided north through the Straits of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf, under constant threat from hostile speedboats, aircraft and ground-based missile sites. Missions can be taken one at a time or strung together to make a longer campaign. There are also options to resume games from positions that have been saved to disk.

Once the mission is selected, a shipyard is displayed and the player views the available ships in the strike fleet. The player gets a points 'budget' which is used to allocate ships to his task force, each class having an individual points rating representing their worth. Ships from different classes can therefore be added or dropped from the fleet as long as their total point value doesn't exceed those available. The points value of the ships brought back after a successful mission also dictates the size of any climb in rank the player might make.

The ten ship classes range from guided missile cruisers, destroyers and frigates to fast hydrofoil attack craft (PHM Pegasus included!). The larger vessels carry an arsenal which include cannon, three types of missile, torpedoes, Lynx or Lamp helicopters plus chaff and phalanx bursts to deter incoming rockets.

The final task on the shipyard screen is to designate the flagship, which the rest of the fleet follow through the danger zone. This done, it's time to set sail . . .

A map of the target area appears, and information on each vessel is called up via a status bar at the bottom of the screen. Ships are ordered to change speed, destination or scanning systems, split from the main group to fulfil separate objectives and rejoin later. It is also possible to zoom in on any part of the map to check the current location of the fleet in relation to surrounding coastlines.

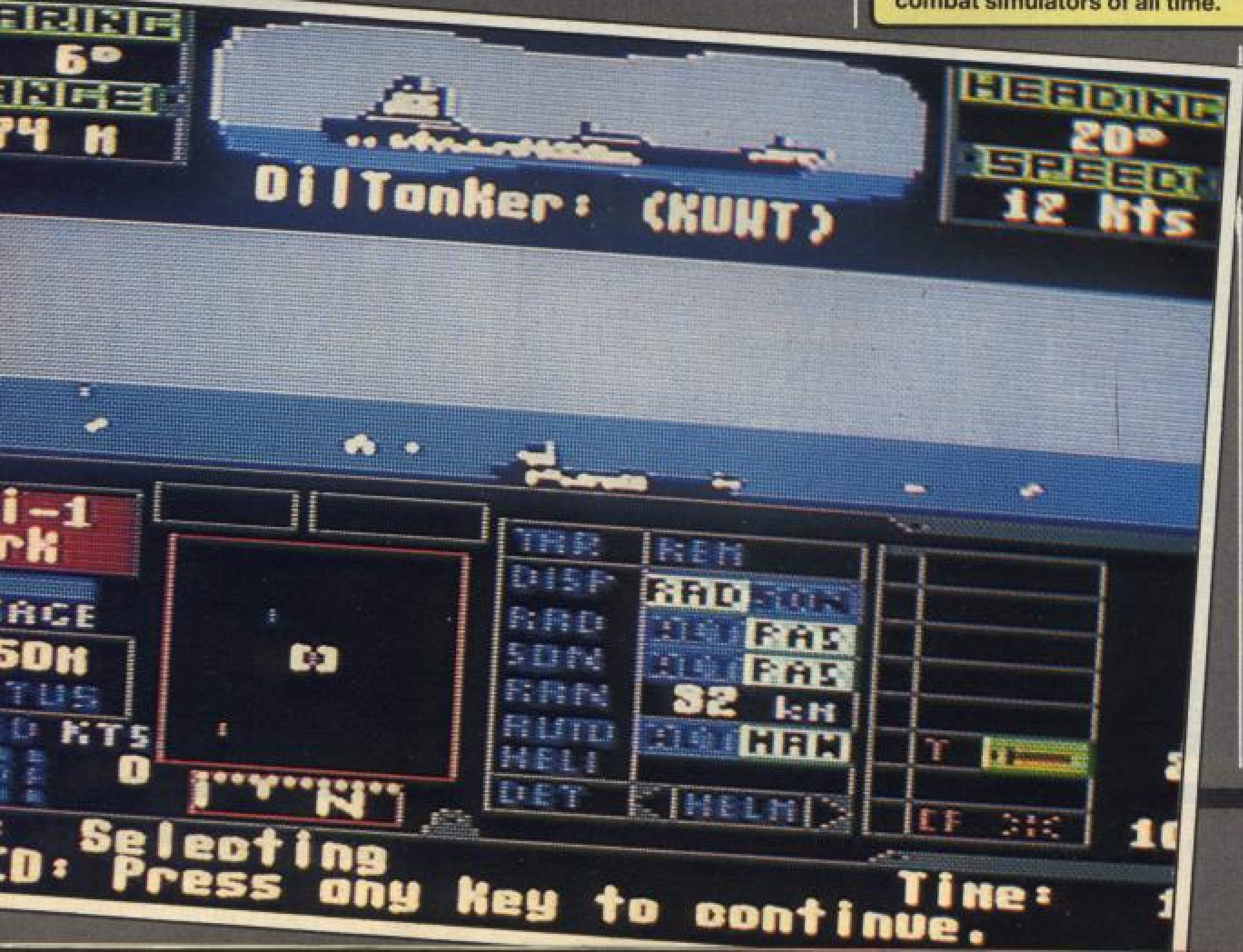
Selecting 'Bridge' takes the player to the command centre of the flagship, from where the battle is viewed and controlled. The ability to move between allied ships and helicopters also allows the player to watch and dictate the action from different viewpoints.

The onboard information and control panel is split by a panoramic forward view of the ocean, taking in other vessels and coastline features. Below this are displays which notify the player of weapons which are available and activated, scanning status (RADAR and SONAR active or passive as well as range being scanned), present speed and heading, damage incurred and crew alert status (Rest or General Quarters). The switchable RADAR/SONAR display has a variable search range of up to 256 kilometres and detects enemy targets without divulging the player's position.

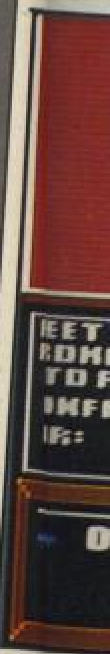
All RADAR/SONAR contacts are scrutinised by switching to a targetting display at the top of the



A t first glance Strike Fleet **seems very similar to** PHM Pegasus **as it has the same sort of screen layout and general presentation. However, Lucasfilm have improved on all the weak areas of** Pegasus **with the addition of more action, improved graphics and more intensive play. One very nice touch is that you can take control of the PHM Pegasus and take her on a mission if you want! Although the game looks rather complex, the action is made incredibly easy to get into by the clear and user-friendly screen layout and the interesting and informative instruction manual. The atmosphere generated is tremendous – you get completely wrapped up in the proceedings as you escort oil tankers through the gulf, avoid direct conflict with Iranian gunships and partake in some possible World War III scenarios. I particularly enjoy playing the contemporary Gulf missions, as knowing that you're in such a realistic situation makes the action that much more tense and involved. There's nothing quite like keeping an eye on two approaching enemy patrol boats and trying to shoot down an incoming Exocet and Mirage at the same time! Lucasfilm's efforts to play down the glories of possible conflict are very admirable – you're informed several times not to fire the first shot, and are penalised for excessive use of force. It would have been so easy to create a sickening arcade-style 'blast the Reds out of the water' scenario. Another neat touch is that you really have to watch what the enemy is doing. Using a single enemy shot as an excuse to wipe out an entire fleet isn't always a good idea, and the result could mean a terrible escalation of exchanges to the point where the destruction of your fleet is inevitable. The graphics are superb throughout, with many, many neat touches to heighten realism: things like ships on fire and the smoke being seen from over the horizon, the enormous vapour trail as a missile is launched, and the long delay as guns are fired from afar – even the water plumes vary. The attention to detail is outstanding. The sound is a little poor, and really, that's the only area where** Strike Fleet **is weak. There are ten missions in all, which vary from relatively easy to very, very tough. If you manage to complete them all – which would take some doing – you can always change your fleet around and try again!** Strike Fleet **is outstanding, and ranks as one of the best combat simulators of all time.**



► **A SAAM gunboat of questionable origin bears down upon the strike fleet, intent on wreaking destruction**





I enjoyed playing Electronic Arts' PHM Pegasus, but constantly felt that there should be more to it. Lucasfilm must have been listening when I said that, because what should appear this month but Strike Fleet – practically PHM Pegasus II, and with all the features lacking in its predecessor! The level of complexity afforded to this simulation is very commendable, and the amount of frantic keypressing required to co-ordinate the strike fleet gives a much-needed shot in the arm to the otherwise staid PHM Pegasus-type missions. If you think combat simulations aren't very exciting, just try fending off three incoming missiles, a circling Mirage and a handful of speedy gunboats all at the same time! The graphics are of a consistently high standard, and work hand-in-hand with the tense gameplay to create a convincing, arcade-style combat atmosphere. This isn't to denigrate the tactical element, though, since foolhardy or rash actions are usually met with prompt and often drastic replies! Blue Peter-type hint number one: during the heat of battle, I felt a keyboard overlay would have been a nice inclusion, but you could easily knock one up with some paper and Gunship's overlay as a template if you have it – and get a grown-up to help you! Give your adrenalin gland some exercise: buy Strike Fleet.

▶ The shipyard screen of *Strike Fleet* shows available ships in the task force – all one of it



screen. Here, a binocular view of the selected vessel is displayed, with annotations to its identity and country of origin. Also shown are its heading (or target in the case of missiles), speed, range and relative bearing.

To avoid long periods of inactivity while waiting for enemy contact, a time compression facility is included in the program, allowing the action to progress at up to 128 times faster than it would in real time.

Victorious operations are rewarded with a suitable decoration, but in such troubled waters death and dishonour come much more easily than the trappings of success!



I've played lots of simulations in the past, but I can't recall ever bouncing up and down on my seat, incredulous at the realistic depiction of Seakiller missiles being launched at me from the deck of an Iranian Saam class frigate. The event that really had me biting my nails was being informed of an enemy missile approaching my vessels at MACH 3, but being unable even to see it because it was still about 500 kilometres away and beyond radar range! The depth which is contained in each scenario is quite extraordinary and all are totally engrossing. In fact, I would go so far as to say that in the gameplay stakes Strike Fleet lacks nothing. If the sound effects had had more work put into them I would be lacking a superlative to do it justice, but as it is, I'll just say that this is the combat simulation your disk drive was made for.

▶ The main scenario selection screen displaying missions and their relative locations across the globe



PRESENTATION 97%
The game can be easily and extensively altered by the player. First-rate documentation and control method, as well as a save game and time compression options also merit much praise.

GRAPHICS 91%
Neat and realistic touches abound in the depiction of the action.

SOUND 39%
Inadequate and almost detrimental sound effects. A short but sweet tune accompanies the title screen.

HOOKABILITY 95%
Easy to get started, and even easier to become captivated by the tense and tangible atmosphere.

LASTABILITY 91%
Ten varied missions to accomplish and the ability to rearrange the fleet to a large degree.

OVERALL 96%
The finest example of simulated sea-faring combat yet.

ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

4TH & INCHES

Accolade, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

●Exciting grid-iron action in Accolade's superb American football simulation

Those with a raging desire to run a QB Sneak, execute a Right Dog play or pretend to be a refridgerator should find that Accolade's *4th & Inches* fits the bill. This latest version of the trans-Atlantic contact sport gives one or two players the opportunity of manipulating the whole course of a game, from 1st and 10 to final whistle, and even overtime.

Before a game, the play set-up is confirmed, designating the number of players, team colour (red versus blue) and the length of each quarter, from 5, 10 or 15 minutes.

The main playing screen is divided into four sections: the field, the offensive and defensive play selection boxes (coloured accordingly), plus a panel displaying the down, number of yards remaining and the time. The action is displayed as a series of single screens: when the ball reaches the edge of one screen it flicks to the next.

Plays are selected *Hardball*-style, combining appropriate joystick actions with the fire button. Three selections are made for each play, accessed from separate menus which appear automatically. The first menu details the team formations available, the second lists the accessible plays (running, kicking or passing) and the final selection determines the position of the ball receiver in a passing play, or the position of the player-controlled footballer in a running play.

Once the whole play has been determined, it runs automatically with the player able to time the pass, guide the receiver, guide a pre-selected defensive player and time field goals or punts as necessary. The controlled player is constantly highlighted and during a defensive manoeuvre, (chasing an opposing player in possession of the ball, for instance) control often changes to that player closest to the ball.

At any time during the game, the Coaches' screen is accessed to show both teams. This enables the player to call time-outs, check player statistics and alter the team line-up for different plays if needed. Each position has a first and second string player: the computer automatically selects first string players, but for specialist situations (double tight end plays, for example) the second string players are required. The statistics reveal height, weight, experience and the relative speed and strength of each player.

The package's instructions detail the game's terminology, general rules and provide a full run-down on the types of plays, player positions and tactics.

I enjoy watching the odd game of American football (4:00 Monday morning, Superbowl XXII!) but don't really class myself as a devout fanatic. However, the scant knowledge that I have of the game enabled me to enjoy *4th & Inches* enormously. Learning the different plays (and there are plenty) and interacting within the action as it unfolds is a genuinely exciting experience: on many occasions I found myself screaming at my red player in possession of the ball, desperately trying to urge him on as eleven blue shirts came hurtling after him!
The mixture of calling tactical plays and effective hands-on control, make 4th & Inches really captivating to play. The graphic presentation is particularly well executed and although small, the footballer sprites are neat, adequately animated and extremely convincing. The one single disappointing aspect of the whole program is the sound: the jingles and effects effects are all bearable, but very poor, and do little to increase the atmosphere. Even so, I can openly admit to playing 4th & Inches more than any other game this month. If you like American football, sports simulations, or just electrifying two-player action – 4th & Inches is a sure-fire winner.





For the uninitiated, confusion will probably be the first reaction to 4th & Inches: just playing the game without reading the instructions leads to some heavy defeats. However, once you discover which moves to make and when to implement them, you soon experience the satisfaction of your first touchdown. The presentation is superb: helpful instructions, intelligent computer control, touches of humour, access to player statistics and the ability to alter the game's parameters. This attention to detail complements the appropriate if unspectacular graphical and aural effects. The sprites are stocky and smoothly animated: the effect of ten opponents thundering down on your man in possession is brilliant! The sound effects are merely adequate, contributing atmosphere without embellishment (the tune before plays is particularly neat), and a few 'hut, hut!' sounds would have been welcome. Virtual freedom of movement is provided, giving a strong sense of control over actions without proving too complex, and in two-player mode this really comes into its own. Flexible gameplay and superb presentation unite to create a realistic and enjoyable simulation; whether or not you're a fan of the sport, 4th & Inches should provide a great deal of long-term enjoyment.

PRESENTATION 93%
A wide range of useful options, unobtrusive selection method and an innovative screen switching technique.

GRAPHICS 80%
Basic, but clear and colourful with good animation on the sprites.

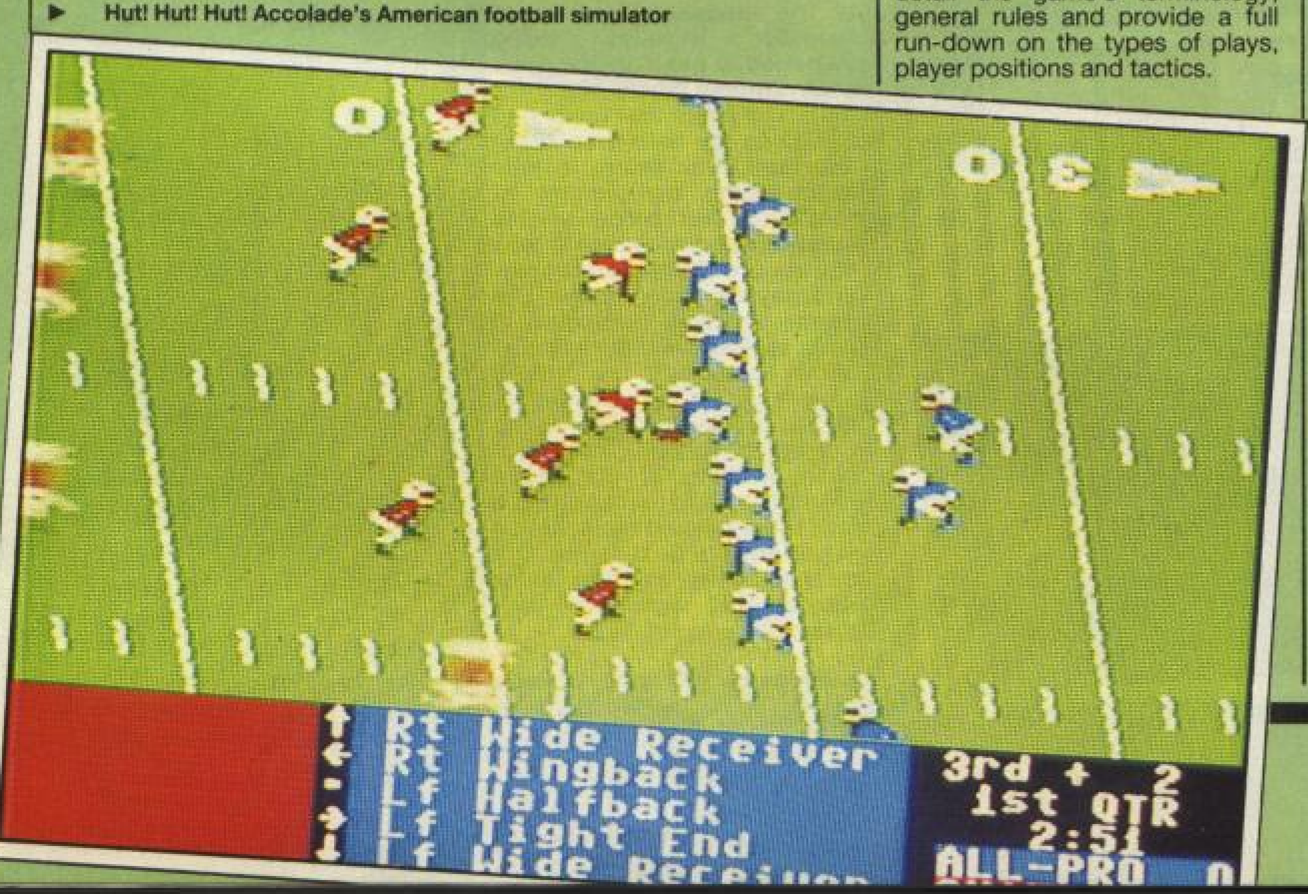
SOUND 41%
Sparse but adequate sound effects, with weedy occasional jingles.

HOOKABILITY 83%
Easy to pick up and play, but difficult to pick up and win.

LASTABILITY 89%
Long term enjoyment is enhanced by a decent computer opponent and the superb two-player option.

OVERALL 90%
The most accomplished, entertaining and realistic American Football simulation to date.

► **Hut! Hut! Hut! Accolade's American football simulator**





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AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY
Lying low in Gibraltar, poor persecuted Monty Mole's whereabouts have been leaked to 'Intermole', who are in hot pursuit.



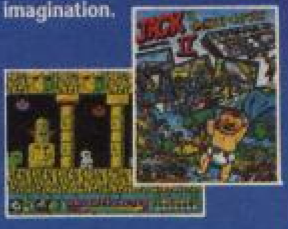
MASK
Join with the forces of MASK, skilfully commanded by Matt Trakker and combat the villainous VENOM in their quest for domination of the world.



DEATH WISH 3
Modern day vigilante Paul Kersey wreaks his own form of revenge on the scum and filth that terrorise the streets of New York.



JACK THE NIPPER IN COCONUT CAPERS
Banished to Australia, our favourite little horror jumps plane to land in deepest, darkest jungleland. What havoc he goes on to create is limited only by your imagination.



BULLDOG
Blast your way through infinite levels of high speed space action, penetrating your enemies outer defence system to reach and destroy the POLON mothership.



THE FINAL MATRIX
Brave Nimrod, sent on a dangerous and apparently endless mission to rescue other Bioptons imprisoned on the sinister Matrix prison network.



THING BOUNCES BACK
A quick hand and dogged determination are needed if you're to get anywhere with Thing, as Gremlin's springiest star bounces back in a new adventure.



BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE
Will your powers of deduction be enough to enable Basil to rescue Dr Dawson from the villainous clutches of Professor Ratigan?



CONVOY RAIDER
The free world is in peril, the future of the country lies in your hands, frighteningly powerful weapons are at your disposal and important decisions must be made.



SAMURAI TRILOGY
In an age in which honour was revered, a class of warriors set themselves apart to dedicate their lives to a perfection in combat and discipline of mind that became a religion.



RE-BOUNDER
Armed to the teeth, challenge the might of the meddling overlord, to return to a happy-go-lucky life as a B...B...Bounder.



GREMLIN

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd.,
Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
Tel: (0742) 753423

Screen shots from various formats.

THE 1987 ZZAP! READERS' AWARDS

After spending many an hour sorting and compiling an absolute mountain of voting forms, ZZAP! proudly presents the definitive software awards for 1987 . . .

BEST GAME OVERALL

CALIFORNIA GAMES
Epyx

THE LAST NINJA
System 3
WIZBALL
Ocean
BUBBLE BOBBLE
Firebird
DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirrorsoft

A hard-fought contest resulted in Epyx's state-of-the-art sports simulation netting 17.2% of the overall votes, with *The Last Ninja* and *Wizball* taking 14.8% and 13.6% apiece. This left the bouncy arcade conversion and the Cinemaware title fighting it out with 6.8% and 5.6% respectively.

BEST PLATFORM GAME

BUBBLE BOBBLE
Firebird

NEBULUS
Hewson
AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY
Gremlin Graphics
SOLOMON'S KEY
US Gold
THING BOUNCES BACK
Gremlin Graphics

Bubble Bobble was the clear winner in this category, capturing a whopping 34.8% of the total votes. *Nebulus* also achieved a creditable result with 17.6%, but after that there was a wide gap until Monty turned up with 3.6%. Following very closely were *Solomon's Key* and *Thing*, who took 3.2% and 2.8% apiece.

BEST SHOOT 'EM UP

WIZBALL
Ocean

DELTA
Thalamus
MEGA APOCALYPSE
Martech
ZYNAPS
Hewson
SLAP FIGHT
Imagine

Another hard-fought contest, won with a vote of 18.8% by Sensi-Soft's masterful colour 'em in. This came just ahead of Mr Fasoulas' game of electric death which got a straight 14%, which was in turn followed by *Mega Apocalypse*'s 9.2% and *Zynaps* (8.4%). *Slap Fight* managed to scrape into fifth place with 1.2% of the total vote.

BEST ARCADE CONVERSION

BUBBLE BOBBLE
Firebird

BUGGY BOY
Elite
COMBAT SCHOOL
Ocean
OUT RUN
US Gold
GAUNTLET II
US Gold

Bubble Bobble bounced its way to the top of the list in this category too, grabbing 24.4% of the votes cast. *Buggy Boy* and *Combat School* took 16.8% and 12.4% respectively, leaving the two US Gold products at the rear end with a close 4.4% and 4% to their names.

BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE

LAST NINJA
System 3

HEAD OVER HEELS
Ocean
GAUNTLET II
US Gold
WIZBALL
Ocean
MANIAC MANSION
Activision

A decisive victory for John Twiddy's Oriental opus, which dominated the voting with a 28% share. Head and Heels came in with a praiseworthy 18.8%, followed by *Gauntlet II* which took the bronze with 7.6%. *Wizball* and *Maniac Mansion* took the small change, netting 4% and 3.2% respectively.

BEST ADVENTURE

GUILD OF THIEVES
Rainbird

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirrorsoft
GNOME RANGER
Level 9
LURKING HORROR
Infocom
KNIGHT ORC
Level 9

Rainbird's picturesque masterpiece made a whole 24% of the votes its own, leaving Magnetic Scrolls' competitors standing for the second year running. *Defender of the Crown*'s comparatively minuscule 5.6% gave it second place over *Gnome Ranger*'s 4.8%. It wouldn't be an adventure chart without Infocom, but they were pushed into a back seat this year, collecting only 3.6% of the votes cast, though this still placed it slightly above Level 9's other entry, which managed 3.6%

BEST STRATEGY GAME

RUSSIA
SSG

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirrorsoft
BATTLES IN NORMANDY
SSG
B24 FLIGHT SIMULATOR
SSI/US Gold
VIET NAM
SSI/US Gold

The Aussies from SSG will be pleased to know that their battle simulation beat off attacks from the Cinemaware game by only a couple of votes! *Russia* took 10.8%, leaving *Defender of the Crown* only four percentage points behind at 10.4%. Third place also went to SSG, whose *Battles in Normandy* came out of the warzone with 8.8%, leaving *B24 Flight Simulator* with 6.4%. It's interesting to note that *Viet Nam*, which took a 4% slice of the vote, was last year voted into the number one position in this category. Old soldiers, as they say, never die . . .

BEST SIMULATION

GUNSHIP
Microprose

CALIFORNIA GAMES
Epyx
WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD
US Gold
CHUCK YEAGER'S AFT
Electronic Arts

▶

BUGGY BOY
Elite

Another 'No Contest' category. The mighty helicopter simulation took a mighty 32.8% proportion of the votes cast, twice as large as *California Games'* 16.4%. *World Class Leaderboard* didn't quite live up to its forbear, which took first place in this category last year. Nevertheless, a respectable 10.4% was enough to earn it third place, leaving General Yeager and the Boy in the Buggy to mop up with 7.2% and 2.4% apiece.

BEST GRAPHICS

LAST NINJA
System 3

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirrorsoft
CALIFORNIA GAMES
Epyx
WIZBALL
Ocean
NEBULUS
Hewson

An even more decisive victory for *The Last Ninja* than in the Best Arcade Adventure category! This time, the intricate visuals of Mr Twiddy's game won it 29.2% of the votes cast, leaving the beautiful stills of the ubiquitous *Defender of the Crown* to take second place with 14%. Summery sprites and backdrops put *California Games* close to the hearts of 9.6% of the voters, leaving the surreal beauty of *Wizball* to collect 6.4%. *Nebulus'* spectacular circular scrolling and cute looks brought it 4.4% and gave it fifth place.

BEST MUSIC

DELTA
Thalamus

THE LAST NINJA
System 3
WIZBALL
Ocean
MEGA APOCALYPSE
Martech
ARCADE CLASSICS
Firebird

Rob Hubbard proved no-one knows SID like he does for the second year in succession. *Delta*'s weird and wonderful melodies took delivery of 23.6% of this category's votes. *The Last Ninja*'s 16.8% earned it second place, followed by Martin Galway's wild and wonderful *Wizball* soundtracks, which took 9.2% of the vote. A simulated five voices gave *Mega Apocalypse* fourth place with 8.8%, allowing more of Rob's work to bring up the rear – *Arcade Classics* with 4%.

BEST SOUND EFFECTS

WIZBALL
Ocean

MEGA APOCALYPSE
Martech
INTERNATIONAL KARATE +
System 3
CALIFORNIA GAMES
Epyx
BARBARIAN
Palace

A close-run contest indeed, but *Wizball* just managed to pip talkative *Mega Apocalypse*'s 11.2% with a vote of 13.6%. All those biffing and bashing sounds obviously had a wide appeal, or at least they did to the 7.2% of you who voted for *IK+*, leaving 5.6% to go to *California Games* and 4.8% to the even meatier effects of *Barbarian*.

BEST PROGRAMMER

ANDREW BRAYBROOK

STAVROS FASOULAS
CHRIS YATES AND JONATHAN HARE
ROB HUBBARD
JOHN TWIDDY

Accomplished coders all, but this proved to be a two horse race. Although not as popular as he was in last year's awards, Mr Braybrook took his regular seat with 25.6% of the vote. The main drain on Andrew's vote was Stavros Fasoulas, who received 21.2% of the ballot. Cuddly Chrix and Jovial Jops made their first appearance in the honours list after showing their programming mettle in *Wizball* and *SEUCK*, and they received 7.6% of the votes. The essential Geordie element brought up the rear with Rob collecting 7.2% and John taking 3.6%.

BEST SOFTWARE HOUSE

OCEAN

US GOLD
SYSTEM 3
EPYX
HEWSON

A year's worth of fine products netted Ocean 25.2% of your votes, just a few points more than US Gold, who took the silver medal with 22%. System 3's quality Oriental fighting games won them 12.4% leaving honorary mentions to go to Epyx, who took 8.8%, and Hewson, who received 4.8%.

BEST ADVERT

OUT RUN
US Gold

CALIFORNIA GAMES
Epyx
BARBARIAN
Palace
THE LAST NINJA
System 3
DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirrorsoft

A wide spread of advertisements were voted for, but the latent merits of the *Out Run* ad put it top of the list on 14.4% of the voting forms, beating the sunny sportiness of the large *California Games* ad, which claimed 9.2%. We feel that the charms of a certain Miss Whittaker may have won *Barbarian* 8% of the votes and placed it next on the list, overshadowing the sinister simplicity of the System 3 ad which took 6%. Perhaps the 4% who voted for *Defender of the Crown* did so for similar reasons, but let's not dwell on that, eh?

LEAST FAVOURITE GAME

ENDURO RACER
Activision

INSPECTOR GADGET
Melbourne House
INDIANA JONES & THE TEMPLE OF DOOM
US Gold
JUDGE DREDD
Melbourne House
BREAKTHRU
US Gold

Usually quite a spread of games are unlucky enough to get a mention in this category, but this year, a few were most outstanding. The *Enduro Racer* conversion took the unenviable title with 11.6% of the votes cast, letting *Inspector Gadget* get away with second place on 8.8%. Next up was *Indiana Jones* who took a 5.6% slice of the custard pie, leaving *Judge Dredd* and the elderly and awful *Breakthru* to fight over fourth position, both receiving 3.2% of the vote

STATE OF THE ART AWARD

THE SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT
Outlaw

THE LAST NINJA
System 3
CALIFORNIA GAMES
Epyx
WIZBALL
Ocean
DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirrorsoft

Surprisingly enough, Sensible Software's game-building tool beat off all the games which proved so popular in the other categories to take the ultimate title. A 20% proportion of the vote assured it of its position, leaving the now flagging *Last Ninja* to take 14.4%, *California Games*, 12.4%, *Wizball*, 8.8% and last, but by no means least, *Defender of the Crown*, 7.2%.

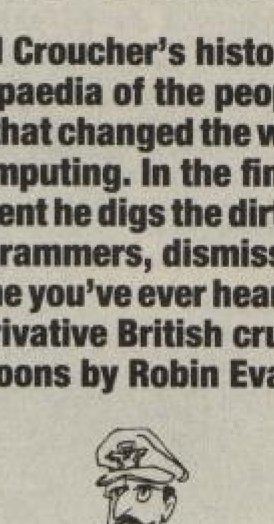

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PART FOUR

Mel Croucher's historic encyclopaedia of the people and events that changed the world of computing. In the final instalment he digs the dirt on the programmers, dismissing everyone you've ever heard of as 'derivative British crud'. Cartoons by Robin Evans.



~ SEVENTY SIX ~

GRACE HOPPER. Now hear this, women invented computer programming. Not men – women. Last month I cited AUGUSTA ADA BYRON as the first programmer in history. Born in 1815, she invented 'loops', 'subroutines', 'the conditional jump', 'random access memory' and designed computers that would play chess and synthesise music. I forgot to mention that her private life exploded in scandal when her computerised horse racing system failed, and she died in agony of stomach cancer aged 36. In modern times it was another woman who re-invented programming. She is the maths genius, Captain Grace Murray Hopper PhD, US Navy, who enlisted in 1943 'Because there was a war on', and was given the task of 'taming the monster', Harvard University's Mark One Computer. Grace Hopper not only tamed it, she invented 'debugging', 'the compiler', 'binary programming', COBOL, and was once awarded 'Man Of The Year', but then the Yanks are a funny lot. Last I heard, she was still going strong aged 78!

~ SEVENTY SEVEN ~

WILLIE CROWTHER & DON WOODS. So here we are then, Number Seventy Seven, and I present the guys who wrote the first ever commercially successful computer game. Willie spelt the middle two letters of his surname wrong, but I don't hold that against him. Without *Adventure*, written on a mainframe two decades ago, this magazine wouldn't exist, I'd be out of work and you'd be £1.25 better off. Every single adventure ever written since Willie and Don strutted their stuff has been derivative of their American work.

~ SEVENTY EIGHT ~

MARTIN MITCHELL. Text-only simulations that don't rely on fantasy are today's yuppie-fodder. Back in 1973 Martin Mitchell developed *Corplan* on a mainframe at Hatfield Polytechnic. It involved running your own company, hiring and firing, buying and lying, and set the pattern for every MANAGEMENT GAME since.

~ SEVENTY NINE ~

NOLAN BUSHNELL. In 1972, young Master Bushnell invented the first popular ARCADE GAME. He called it *Pong*. Sure enough it stank. It was a load of old tosh, but without any competition it cleaned up. For anyone under the age of 15, *Pong* was a sort of crawl-motion table tennis, comprising a blob, a pair of blips and sound effects that went, um, 'blob-blip'. In 1976, Bushnell sold his company to Warner Brothers. They gave him £28 million for it. It was called Atari.

~ EIGHTY ~

BILL HOGUE. All arcade games are tarted up *Pongs*, and now and again they evolve into something slightly new. The last major evolution came from the American Bill Hogue, who wrote *Miner 2049'er* for the Atari 400/800. It was the first ever PLATFORM GAME, and father of hundreds of bastard offspring such as *Manic Miner*.

~ EIGHTY ONE ~

BILL BUDGE. Bills always seem to arrive at the same time, so here's another one. Once upon a time, video games players were forced to accept whatever software houses spewed over them. Bill Budge, who sounds like something out of a Charles Dickens novel, changed all that by marketing the first games CONSTRUCTION KIT program. It ran on an Apple, and allowed the user to design their own video pinball machine.

~ EIGHTY TWO ~

SCOTT ADAMS. Like it or not, the USA dominates all aspects of games programming. Here in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland we piddle around refining and corbliming third-hand Yank ideas, imitation being the sincerest form of fartery. Scott Adams was the first 'star' programmer. The first guy who could sell games just by putting his name to them. And why not? His original 12 adventures are still classics, and he was arguably the first programmer to create 'computer personalities', such as *The Count*.

~ EIGHTY THREE ~

RICHARD BARTLE & ROY TRUBSHAW. The noblest pair of Brit refiners, redefiners and corblimers are probably Ricky and Roy. While at Essex University they devised the Multi-User Dungeon, *MUD*. It runs on a DEC-10 mainframe, and players enter into its weird and wonderful world by squirting themselves down their telephone wires, whereupon they can adopt a new personality. The main thing about *MUD* is that it's different every time you play it, and the characters you meet are for real.

~ EIGHTY FOUR ~

MASS DEBATERS. Educated folk reckon that the first ever GRAPHICS ADVENTURE, including drawn pictures and text, was *The Wizard and The Princess*', which came out for the Apple in 1982. Far be it from me to challenge this opinion and suggest that the first graphics adventure, including drawn pictures, animated cartoon, text, a music soundtrack and a genuine treasure to be located in a real place was something called *PiMania* by an egomaniac named Croucher. He reckons that he was also responsible for the first software compilation, the first budget range, the first celebrity endorsement, the first real-time adventure, the first broadcasting of a software series on AM and FM radio, the first computing comic strip, the first interactive video, the first trivia program, the first multi-event sports program, and the first resignation from his own company on April the first. He is, of course, quite mad.

~ EIGHTY FIVE ~

BRUCE ARTWICK. Brucie was a pilot with Hughes Aircraft USA. He was trying to develop a FLIGHT SIMULATOR for years when some bright spark threw an Apple II at him. He began with simple print-outs of airspeed, fuel, heading and distance and today his amazing programs come equipped with a 184 page manual! All of your flight simulators are weedy imitations of his work.

~ EIGHTY SIX ~

GORDON PASK. The year was 1954, the innovation was COMPUTER ART. Pask made a machine and wrote a program that translated sounds into beams of light, named 'Musicolor'. It analysed pitch, rhythm and tone from live or recorded sound, and actually looked for improvisations from music that it had already 'learned'. Eat your heart out Jeff Minter!

~ EIGHTY SEVEN ~

GEORGE MALLEN. In 1962, George Mallen was working at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, using a Ferranti Mercury computer to simulate air-traffic control. He claims to have invented the flight simulator, but I have found no documentary proof of this. George's claim to fame is much more important; he's the first COMPUTER ARTIST. When ▶







he 'freaked out' in the late 60's (ask your parents about what happened back then), he joined the Computer Arts Society and developed *Eco-Game* in 1969. Mallen went on to design the *Decision Room* for Allende's Marxist government in Chile, probably the first and last time a country has been successfully run by a computer game. These days George is still going strong, working on computer simulations for special effects on productions like Ridley Scott's *Alien*.

~ EIGHTY EIGHT ~

JOHN WHITNEY. This gentleman is not the father of computer graphics entertainment, he's the grandfather and Godfather rolled into one. Back in the 1940's he invented 'slit scan' techniques and twenty years later he masterminded the revolutionary 'stargate' sequence in Stanley Kubrick's *2001 A Space Odyssey*. In the 60s he was pushing a Los Angeles IBM to its limits, reputed to be the biggest computer in the States outside the Pentagon, but in 1974 he went on intellectual strike! He's still waiting for technology to catch up with his ideas, and it's just possible that he'll produce classic CD-I entertainment before he goes through that great stargate in the sky.

~ EIGHTY NINE ~

VERA SHIRLEY. While raising her family in Amersham (turn left at Watford), Vera started a software service from her cottage. The year was 1962, and she had gone and invented the networked GLOBAL OFFICE. Her employees worked from their own homes, linked up to mainframe at Mission Control, and she employed only women. Today F-International is worth millions, and her clients include Mobil Oil and Lloyds Bank. If everyone followed her example we could abolish the rush hour!

~ NINETY ~

NIKLAUS WIRTH was a great admirer of our chum Blaise Pascal (see number Thirty). In 1970 old Nik was working away in Zurich on a new language to handle complex programs on micros, when he came up with a replacement for Basic. Naturally he named it PASCAL, and we can be very grateful that he wasn't an admirer of George Farquhar (1678-1707).

~ NINETY ONE ~

CAROLE ELY & LORE HARP. These two Californian women can lay claim to double fame. In 1976 they gave birth to VECTOR GRAPHICS in their kitchen, and got 'high-school kids, infants, dogs and cats' to assemble computer kits in the bathroom. Ten years later they were employing 400 bods and turning over £150 million. They provided the role model for the thousands of eager loonies who tried to imitate them back in the days when anyone could set up a computer outfit and make a buck or two.

~ NINETY TWO ~

THE SISTERS GRIMM. Once upon a time, in a land across the Western Ocean, there lived a mummy named Leslie, who had two little girls, Cori and Cindy. They played with computers instead of dollies in the cradle. Ten years ago, when their total ages added up to only 38, they invented EDUCATION GAMES, and called themselves the Learning Company. The interactive-reward system for all later educational packages is based on their programs.

~ NINETY THREE ~

SUE MELROSE. After the USA lost the Vietnam War, many of the maimed and crippled were hidden away in Vets' Hospitals. Sue Melrose took on the task of helping blinded Vietnam Veterans using Braille terminals and synth-voice outputs. Her greatest breakthrough has been the development of computer response to the user's spoken instructions. Its greatest abuse has been to use it for fighter-bomber computer control. Ho hum.

~ NINETY FOUR ~

JOHN BRUNNER is a sci-fi writer. He is 54 years old, and his address is care of the NatWest Bank, 7 Fore Street, Chard, Somerset. I thought some of you might want to know that, because in 1975 John was the guy who dreamed up the software VIRUS. So if anyone out there has, for the sake of example, an Amiga suffering from AIDS right now, you know where to find the culprit. Personally I think he's a genius.

~ NINETY FIVE ~

JOSEPH WEIZENBAUM. No matter how they are tarted up, whether by optically stored video images on CDs, holograms or electrodes plugged straight into your brain, computer games are still going to be derivatives of chess or ping-pong. Mixtures of strategy and reflex action. But this is more or less how we live our real lives, and we cannot expect more from computer simulations. The next step in home micro entertainment is going to be PSYCHE-WARE, which was invented in 1964 by Joseph Weizenbaum at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He called his program *Eliza*, after the George Bernard Shaw character who outgrows her human programmer. Users of the *Eliza* program started treating 'her' as a real personality, from the word go.

~ NINETY SIX ~

KATHY AND JAMES JOHNSON. One of those smartassed American couples, she's a research psychologist, he's a clinical psychologist, who have taken Psyche-Ware to the masses, via their HUMAN EDGE SOFTWARE CORPORATION. The Johnson's are Californians, needless to say, and have perfect teeth. Their *Mind Prober* is hideously accurate and is being used by multi-nationals, the military and for all I know my tax inspector, to suss out the poor bleeders who come under their scrutiny. You have been warned.



~ NINETY SEVEN ~

TIMOTHY LEARY. Uncle Tim was the geriatric dippy-hippy guru who turned several million young people onto drugs during the 1960s. But I cannot be too hard on him because he says that his favourite computer game is something called *Deus Ex Machina* by yours truly. Doctor Leary is now a software guru, and has developed SKIPI, which is not a cocaine derivative that makes you jump ropes while singing nursery rhymes, but stands for Super Knowledge Information Processing Intelligence. It allows the user to reprogram her/his own behaviour, and scares the willies out of me.

~ NINETY EIGHT ~

RON LEVY of Cabonics Inc. USA has taken Psyche-Ware a stage further, his software does not allow you to reprogram your behaviour, it reprograms you! By strapping biofeedback electrodes to your head, programs like 'Calm and Clear' effectively hypnotise the user. No doubt some bright spark has already written a program called 'Homicidal Maniac'.



~ NINETY NINE ~

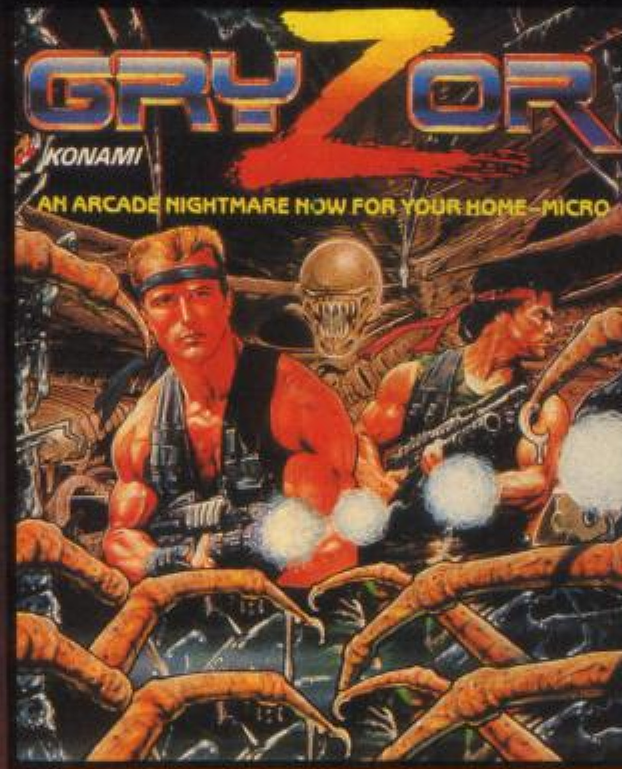
WALLACE D. LABENNE. This gentleman is a psychotherapist, or maybe that should read Psycho The Rapist. His programs have titles like *Expando Vision* and use subliminal messages which are illegal when used in adverts or TV programs, but here is no legislation to cover then when it comes to software. Let me quote you a few of the hypnotic messages it stuffs inside your brain: 'let us be naked', 'sex is OK', 'explore bodies', 'let us make love'. Yours for £40 available for the Vic-20 upwards. Ahem.

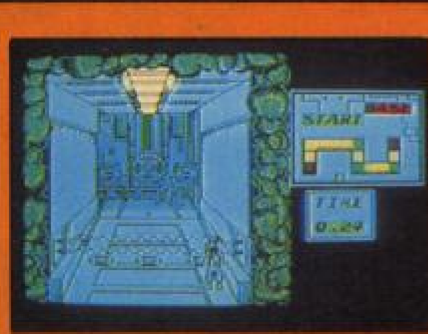
~ ONE HUNDRED ~

WILLIAM GIBSON. If you are in any way concerned with the future of computing as opposed to its past, William Gibson is the most important young writer in the world. He is American. He is the last of my 100 All Time Computer Greats. In his books *Neuromancer* and *Count Zero Interrupt* he tackles the implications of our computerised future. Games software, simulations, psyche-ware, software viruses, electronic sex, drugs and violence, artificial intelligence, totally organised total chaos. Go out now and read his work. NOW, I said.

In next month's ZZAP! Mel Croucher stops delving into the ghost of computing past and whips out his crystal balls! '1988 ... and counting!' takes you gently by the brain and leads you year-by-year to the end of the millenium. And the most frightening of all is that the old fool's predictions will probably all come true. Don't miss it!

SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE







GRYZOR

The coin-op smash hit from Konami now for your home-micro. This fantastic conversion with all the original play features takes you into a thrilling alien world . . . . . negotiate force fields and take on fanatical guerillas as you infiltrate their headquarters.

Split second timing and nerves of steel are a must for this fun packed program where addiction will always bring you back for more!

WORLDS APART,

Survive to become a captain through the toughest training academy. Konami's arcade blockbuster has already reached No 1 in the Gallup charts with this superb conversion for your home-micro.

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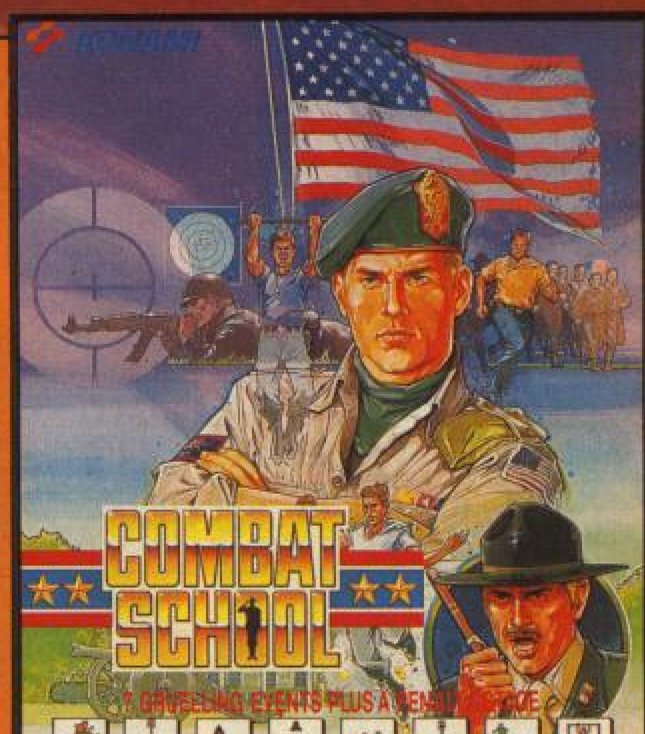
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ZZAP!'s monthly round-up of budget software

SCUMBALL

Bulldog, £1.99 cass, joystick with keys

A horde of nasties, headed by a horrible green slime creature has overrun the sewers. The player controls LINDA, a dedicated and dangerous disposal droid who's assigned the task of flushing them out; eight grenades scattered around the sewers are recovered and used to destroy the nasties' lime-coloured leader.

Different enemies have predetermined effects: some destroy LINDA outright, while others simply drain her power source. Objects such as batteries are found to replenish her energy.

Contact with water, spike pits or pods results in immediate dissolution. The player begins with five droids, but extra ones are collected in the sewers along with bonuses and mystery objects.

An information bar at the top of the screen reveals status levels, droids remaining, grenades to collect, current score the number of the present location.



The inspiration behind Scumball **seems very much to be the classic (now budget) arcade adventure,** Starquake. **The alien atmosphere, highly-detailed graphics, busy sprites, appealing character and large area to explore are all very similar. Nonetheless, this is an entertaining game in its own right. There are some neat traps – some of them very frustrating – but there's a good deal of fun to be had from just bouncing around! The instructions could be a bit more informative: they set the scene, but don't tell you precise details about what you need to do or what the status bars mean. Still, it isn't too difficult to work out how things work. It may be derivative but it's neat, attractive and fun to play.**



This unusual little game is a pleasant mix of genres and is very reminiscent of that old favourite Starquake **– even the hero (or in this case heroine) reminds me greatly of BLOB! Graphically,** Scumball **is very good: bright, colourful sprites move smoothly and quickly around an equally pretty background. Sound consists of an incredibly up-tempo tune that blasts away throughout the game, but unfortunately it repeats far too quickly for extended listening periods. The action, too, tends to wear a little thin after a few heated plays. Still,** Scumball **makes a great budget game and is all the more enjoyable if you liked** Starquake.

PRESENTATION 69%
Uninformative instructions, but clear screen display plus loading game.

GRAPHICS 70%
Not as jolly as the game demands, but detailed and colourful nonetheless.

SOUND 81%
Rapid and enjoyable soundtrack, sadly repeated a little too soon.

HOOKABILITY 71%
Approachable and appealing gameplay is partially spoilt by poor instructions.

LASTABILITY 80%
Plenty of locations to explore, and the game's cutesy atmosphere proves quite attractive.

OVERALL 79%
A playable and attractive arcade adventure in the *Starquake* mould.



SNOOKER AND POOL

Gremlin, £2.99 cass only, joystick with keys

Gremlin's addition to the range of green baize simulators includes snooker and pool on opposite sides of the cassette, although control methods and options are the same for both games. From the title screen, a one or two player mode is selected, with the computer providing an opponent at an adjustable skill level from amateur, novice or professional. A practice mode is also available to sharpen potting skills.

Both games are viewed from the standard overhead viewpoint, with two-thirds of the screen displaying the table and the remaining third containing an information panel. This shows the players' scores, the current break and highest break, the current ball in play and on-screen instructions.



Even at the best of times I find snooker a very slow and tedious game, and this latest budget offering from Gremlin has done nothing to change this opinion. Graphically the game is okay, with a reasonable representation of a snooker table dominating the screen and small but clear balls. The familiar control method is reasonably comfortable in use, but when the desired ball is struck, it spins around the table in a most unconvincing manner. The harsh sound effects only help to dampen the already wilting realism. Even with the addition of the practise mode, I would advise even the budding snooker players among you to take a good look before you part with your readies.



Snooker simulations have never really worked well on the 64, and this is no exception. The lack of realism is both striking and annoying. Graphically it's pretty poor: the brown border is horrible, the balls aren't particularly bright or large and the whole game has a simplistic, coarse feel. The sound is abysmal: the noises fail to mimic the delicate click of ivory and subtle sounds of ball striking cushion. A serious flaw is the small ball size which renders the angles of collision imprecise – it's too often a case of luck rather than judgement and the speed with which balls move after collision is frustratingly inaccurate. Not a very worthy purchase, I'm afraid, even for the blue chalk brigade.

PRESENTATION 44%
A useful series of options and reasonable control method, although the instructions are a little lacking.

GRAPHICS 29%
Purely functional, not very smooth and rather sombre.

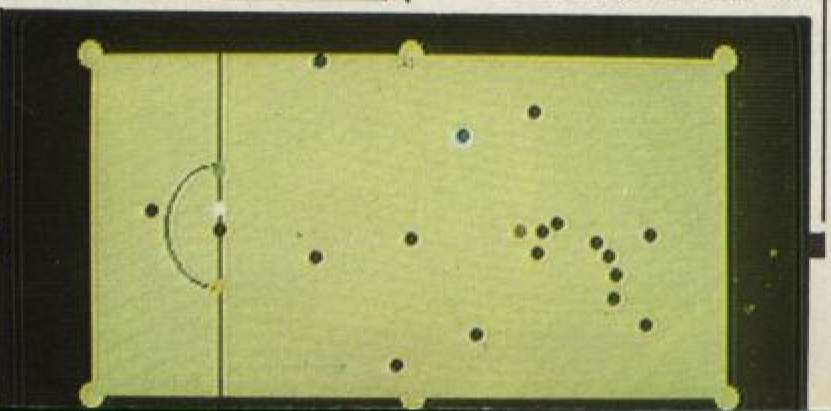
SOUND 9%
Totally unsnooker-like sounds grate after only a short while.

HOOKABILITY 35%
Ease of play contributes to the initial appeal, but the unconvincing movement is offputting.

LASTABILITY 13%
The lack of realism and the frustrating computer opponent nullifies the enjoyment factor.

OVERALL 29%
An unrealistic and annoying simulation which requires too much practice to overcome its faults.

► **Even Steve Davis would have trouble potting these colours!**



ROLLAROUND

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

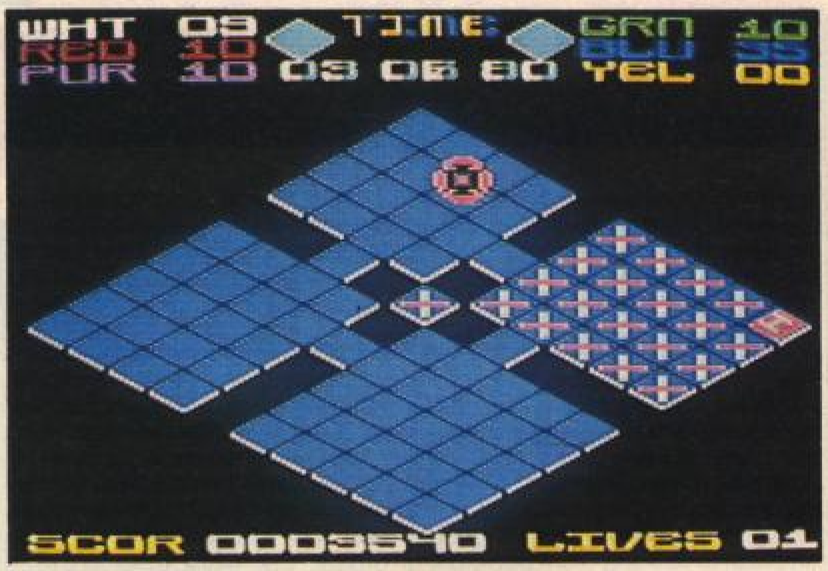
The objective of *Rollaround* is to complete an increasingly difficult series of levels by collecting a required number of crosses from six different colours of square.

Each level is divided into a three by three grid of screens, each containing up to 100 individual squares, many of which have unique effects upon the gameplay. There are also a variety of aliens, and contact with these, falling off the edge of a landscape or down a hole, results in death.

The playing area presents a 3D isometric viewpoint, with information registers at the top and bottom of the screen showing the player's current score and lives remaining, plus the elapsed time and number of crosses to collect.

The ball travels by rolling in any of four directions, or jumping, in conjunction with the fire button. The latter is also used to avoid aliens or clear holes.

When a grid is successfully completed, the player enters into a bonus section where extra points or lives can be gained.



► **Puzzling isometric action in Mastertronic's budget *Spindizzy* variant**



This is very much like Spindizzy without the inertial control method: dangerous landscapes with objects to collect, creatures to avoid and puzzles to solve. Similarly, your character is a little tricky to direct, but after a while it becomes more a matter of timing than skill. The sound is very appealing with a jolly title tune backed up by some Boulderdash-style effects. Graphically, it's a bit basic, and although the grids are quite small, they contain some extremely awkward routes; some of the later screen designs are particularly devious! Fortunately, you're given plenty of lives. If you liked any of the Marble Madness genre and you're feeling a bit starved, this could be the game for you.



I've been pulling my hair out in clumps over this game, it is *so* frustrating. Mastering control of the ball is a real headache, as most of the action takes place on platforms suspended in space: one foul move and your poor ball falls into oblivion. However, after several heated sessions I managed to gain control of the sphere, which greatly increased my enjoyment of the game. The sound is inoffensive, and the gameplay is fast, colourful, and very smooth in operation, as, indeed, are the majority of the recent Mastertronic efforts. A very 'cute' game that is infuriatingly addictive. Go and buy it third, or even forthwith.



PRESENTATION 43%
Good instructions, informative and uncluttered display but no real options.
GRAPHICS 61%
Spartan, but extremely effective, with smooth and precise ball movement.
SOUND 62%
An appropriately jolly title tune and average spot effects.
HOOKABILITY 81%
Once the slightly awkward controls have been mastered, the action is frustrating but compelling.
LASTABILITY 87%
The appealing puzzle factor and increasing complexity prove highly addictive.
OVERALL 82%
An entertaining and engrossing puzzle/dexterity game.

ZZAP! COMP

COMPETITION SIMULATOR

Code Masters, £0.00, postcard or sealed envelope

A couple of weeks ago, Mike Clark of Code Masters fame popped into the ZZAP! office for a chat and a spot of lunch.

During the afternoon he reached into his voluminous Code Masters holdall and pulled out an absolute stack of cassettes – the whole Code Masters range, no less, plus a few extras.

What could we do with all these games? They could go to further clutter our bulging software shelves . . . No: why not give them away as part of a budget competition? Great!

The question was, what test of mettle should decide the lucky recipients of these fab games? Many man-hours were devoted to this task, but nothing was forthcoming. It took Paul's keen Geordie wit* to eventually come up with the patently appropriate question:

How many 'Simulators' have Code Masters actually produced, and what are their names?

Suitably correct answers are to be placed in a large receptacle and the first one drawn wins the Code Masters range. Second and third entries are to be the proud owners of five Code Masters games each.

Write your answer on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, and in bold letters on the other side, put: **COMPETITION SIMULATOR, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number and also don't forget to post your entry. It should get to us by April the 8th to stand a chance of winning.

* Paul's words, not ours . . .

HELIDROP

Top Ten, £1.99 cass, joystick with keys

Following a Moldavian coup, the staff of the country's embassy are under siege. As Joe Starbuck, the player controls a helicopter with which to collect essential supplies and drop them (by pressing the space bar – a fact not related in the instructions) onto the embassy's roof. If the supplies are collected but not delivered, the mission is deemed a failure.

The screen scrolls horizontally from right to left, displaying landscape features, enemy gun positions and helicopters. Contact with any of these or any of the enemy bullets results in the loss of one of three lives. An information panel at the foot of the screen displays the score, supplies delivered and number of lives remaining.



Every aspect of this game is basic in the extreme. From the title screen through to the highscore table, everything is very poorly executed. Gameplay is terribly simple and echoed by the tawdry graphics: monochrome sprites move in hopelessly predictable directions across aesthetically retarded landscapes. The rotor blades offer about the only decent sound effect since the explosions are stupidly inappropriate. Presentation is patronising, with its ridiculous pink hand indicating 'Drop supplies here' and a large arrow on the landscape pointing downwards. However, the major criticism is the inconsistency in the difficulty level: it ranges from moronically simple to frustratingly impossible. This transforms an already weak game into an abysmal one. If it's meant to be a semi-comical homage to some past genre, I didn't find it very funny.



I don't know whose top ten this game is in, but it's horrendous with a capital 'H'. It would appear that some clever fellow has managed to find the secret to time travel, and taken the poor games player back about six years, judging by the awful graphics, which were the focus of some considerable mirth among the team. The awful matchstick men, choppers and tanks decorate a landscape that is infantile and quite unforgivable. Sound consists of a weedy tune on the intro screen, and totally unimpressive sound effects during play. The gameplay itself is minimal, as even from the start, Helidrop **proves quite difficult to actually play and, in the light of the horrible graphics, doesn't do much to make the unfortunate purchaser even try. Avoid this game at all costs: even at a couple of quid you would be wasting your money.**

PRESENTATION 9%
Inaccurate instructions, weak attract sequence and no options.

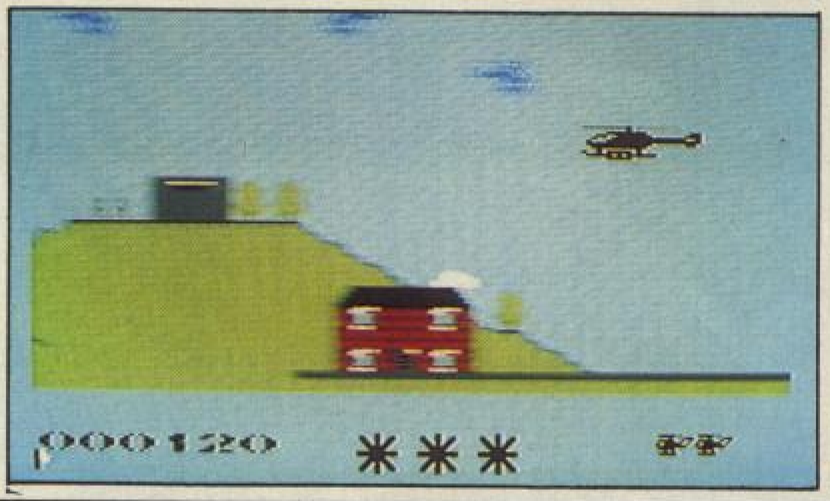
GRAPHICS 7%
Incredibly bad throughout.

SOUND 18%
Reasonable helicopter noise but pathetic explosions.

HOOKABILITY 22%
Basic presentation and poor graphics match the appalling gameplay.

LASTABILITY 8%
Tedious and unrewarding gameplay dispel any addictive qualities.

OVERALL 11%
Dire.



BMX HYPER BIKER SIMULATOR

Top Ten, £1.99 cass, joystick with keys

Top Ten's *BMX HBS* offers the budding biker the opportunity of racing against a computer or human opponent over six increasingly difficult courses, which scroll from left to right. Each course contains a variety of obstacles which are successfully negotiated to allow progress.

From a main options screen, up to four riders can take part, with the races adopting a knockout system: the fastest qualifying time results in passage to the next round.

Three control options are offered, two using the joystick and a third, the keyboard. Additionally, a game can be stopped or restarted at any time.

An information panel above the main playing screen displays the riders' names, their current times, the distance covered and the track qualifying time.



This has unusually good pre-game presentation: the option of two joystick controls and one keyboard, comprehensive (if condescending) instructions, and the ability to race against up to three other opponents (although only one at a time). Unfortunately, the gameplay fails to match this polish, since racing soon becomes a joystick-waggling chore – especially when the computer opponent is so unmercifully consistent. This grows annoying on the later courses, where so much precise timing is required that it becomes virtually impossible to defeat. Additional frustration stems from the graphics: the backdrops are poorly coloured and feebly drawn. Likewise the riders are extremely and unnecessarily basic. This is by far the worst BMX bike simulation I've seen.



Completing Top Ten's brace of turkeys this month comes the long-winded title of BMX Hyper Biker Simulator. **Like its comrade, this game has very little in the way of redeeming features: only the incredible instructions and comprehensive options are really noteworthy. The graphics appear to have been created by the same team that did** Helidrop, **although a passable attempt at parallax scrolling and some animation saves them from total disgrace. Gameplay, however, is awful: the choice of control methods is rendered worthless because none are really adequate. I waggled until I was blue in the face, but never came even close to beating the computer! A terrible release which demands and deserves no attention whatsoever.**

PRESENTATION 83%
Good range of options, comprehensive front end and superb instructions.

GRAPHICS 22%
Poor animation, horrible expanded sprites and drab coloration throughout.

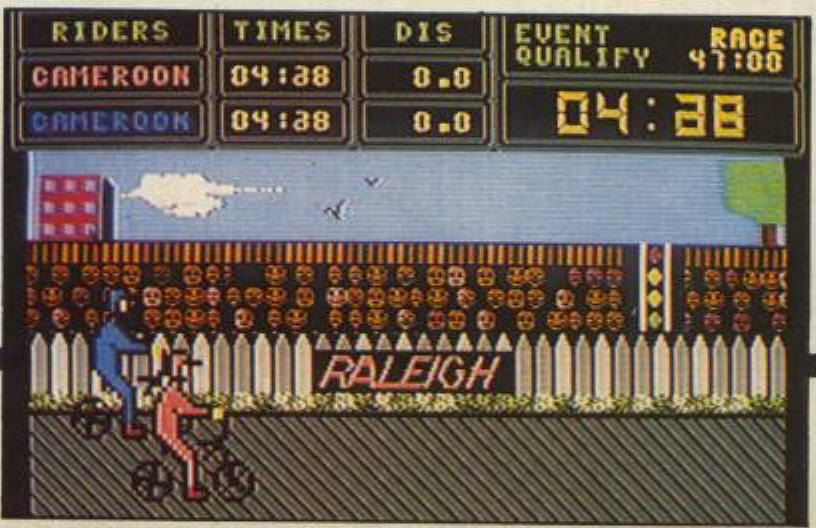
SOUND 25%
Reasonable in-game tune, but no effects.

HOOKABILITY 15%
An almost immediate feeling of antipathy and the visual and aural presentation repel attraction.

LASTABILITY 7%
There *are* six courses but the action is so unappealing that you'll never want to see them.

OVERALL 19%
An uncontrollable and visually biking simulation.

▶ **Top Ten's imaginatively-named *BMX Hyper Biker Simulator***



ZAP! READERS'



GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **CALIFORNIA GAMES** *(11%)*
Epyx

2 *(2)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(8%)*
System 3

3 *(4)* **BUBBLE BOBBLE** *(6%)*
Firebird

4 *(3)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE +** *(5%)*
System 3

5 *(16)* **SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT** *(4%)*
Outlaw

6 *(6)* **WIZBALL** *(3%)*
Ocean

7 *(9)* **BUGGY BOY** *(3%)*
Elite

8 *(5)* **WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD** *(2%)*
US Gold/Access

9 *(8)* **KIKSTART II** *(2%)*
Mastertronic

10 *(11)* **ARCADE CLASSICS** *(2%)*
Firebird

11 *(7)* **WORLD GAMES**
Epyx

12 *(13)* **NEBULUS**
Hewson

13 *(12)* **GAUNTLET**
US Gold

14 *(15)* **DEFENDER OF THE CROWN**
Mirrorsoft

15 *(24)* **OUT RUN**
US Gold

16 *(14)* **LEADERBOARD**
US Gold/Access

17 *(10)* **BARBARIAN**
Palace

18 *(17)* **ELITE**
Firebird

19 *(27)* **720°**
US Gold

20 *(29)* **MATCHDAY II**
Ocean

21 *(18)* **ZYNAPS**
Hewson

22 *(21)* **QUEDEX**
Thalamus

23 *(19)* **THE SENTINEL**
Firebird

24 *(22)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose

25 *(30)* **GAUNTLET II**
US Gold

26 *(20)* **RENEGADE**
Ocean

27 *(-)* **FLYING SHARK**
Firebird

28 *(20)* **DELTA**
Thalamus

29 *(-)* **SKATE OR DIE**
Electronic Arts

30 *(-)* **HUNTER'S MOON**
Thalamus

' CHARTS



MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(1)* **DELTA** *(16%)*
Thalamus
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

2 *(2)* **ARCADE CLASSICS** *(14%)*
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

3 *(3)* **SANXION** *(7%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music – Rob Hubbard

4 *(4)* **MEGA APOCALYPSE** *(6%)*
Martech
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

5 *(5)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE** + *(5%)*
System 3 Title Tune – Rob Hubbard

6 *(8)* **SKATE OR DIE** *(4%)*
Electronic Arts
Title Tune – Rob Hubbard

7 *(6)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(3%)*
System 3
Title Tune – Ben Daglish

8 *(7)* **WIZBALL** *(3%)*
Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

9 *(9)* **I,BALL** *(2%)*
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

10 *(-)* **BMX KIDZ** *(2%)*
Firebird
Title Tune – Rob Hubbard

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All the goodies any ZZAP! reader could possibly want (or we could think of) by mail, courtesy of Auntie Aggie and our jiffy bags





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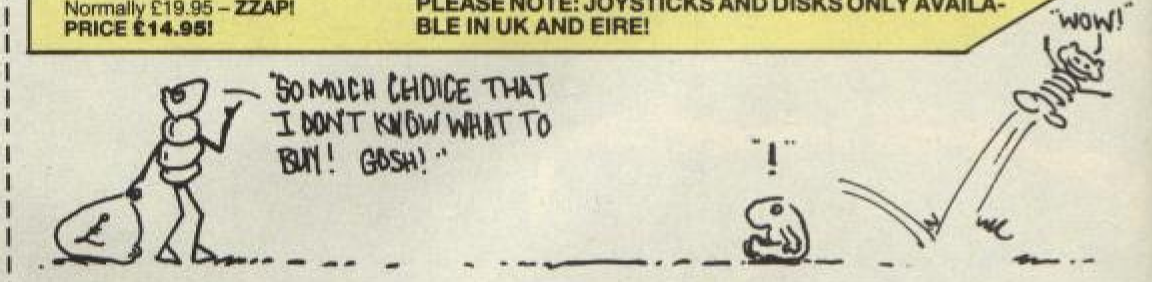
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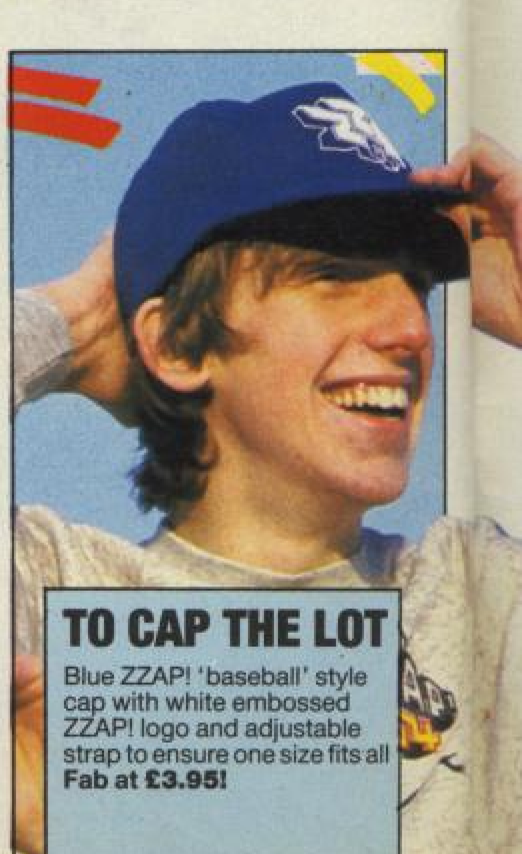
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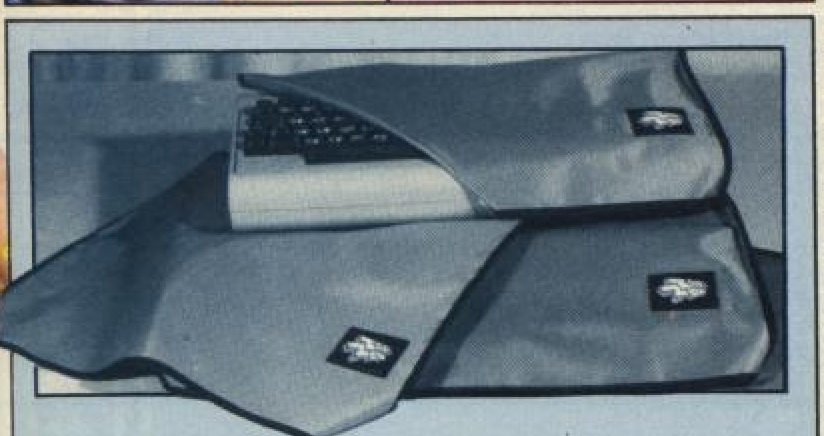
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ZZAP! WINNERS



I'm afraid it's back to the normal amount of winners after last months mega-results pages. Still, there are loads of prizes on offer, and I've also got the results of the Hovercomp which were held over from last month. I've also included some of the piccies from that particular comp, as there were some excellent entries.

There have been a few letters regarding the printing of answers to competitions, and I've decided I'll do this occasionally IF there is enough room. So get reading, and see if you're a lucky winner . . .

DOMARK'S SHORT STORY WINNERS

I really looked forward to judging this competition and wasn't disappointed in any way. They were all neatly presented (typed or neatly written as asked) and the stories were excellent. All entries were read by the ZZAP! team, and the decision to give the first prize to **Mike Jenner**, Herts, AL10 0HN was a unanimous one – you can see his story below. He'll soon be receiving a large parcel full of signed Jeffrey Archer novels. Read on to see if you are amongst the following, who are to receive a copy of *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less*, courtesy of Domark.

F Cotgrave, Merseyside, L44 5RU; Christine Todd, West Midlands, B75 6BT; G S Taylor, Hull, HU5 1DZ; Ian Butcher, East Sussex, TN31 7UQ; Mark Neesam, Rugby, CV23 0DE; Stephen Yates, Middlesex, HA5 3XG; Keith Evans, Liverpool, L14 0LU; J Scott, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE2 2TD; Liz Wharf, Norwich, NR2 3NE; Andrew West, Devon, EX8 3HR; Philip Morgan, Cardiff, CF2 6TH; Bob Kingham, London, E17 9EL; Mr S J Ayres, Middlesex, HA7 3SE; Damon Smith, Herts, WD2 6LE; Mark Cross, Hants, RG25 1AE; Andrew Love, Hertfordshire, WD3 4EA; Robert Wallman, Surrey, RH7 6QF; William Neary, West Lothian, EH49 6LH; Bill Henderson, Scotland, KY15 5DS; James Townend, Northumberland, NE23 6JF; Ceri Stagg, Hants, PO4 8AL; Ian Roberts, Southampton, SO3 2SD; Lee Williams, Lancs, WN8 9DL; JJR King, Shropshire, TF10 9HJ; Stephen Murray, Tyne and Wear, NE31 2LS; Michael Dyer, Southampton, SO3 2FP; Rahul Joshi, London, NW10 3NU; Richard Crisp, Bedfordshire, LU7 8LD; Steve Colbourne, Brighton; Mark Barnsley, West Midlands, DY8 5ED; Osman Sidik, Blackburn, BB1 6EN; Robert Manning, Suffolk, IP4 3QE.

THE DOMARK SHORT STORY WINNER HELL'S BELLS

The last man on Earth sat in silence as he did every day, every month, every year. He wasn't even sure what date it was, nor did he care. Time was just one more thing that no longer mattered in his barren, silent world.

The man had long since give up hope of finding anybody else alive. At first, he had begun to search the towns and cities but to no avail. Over the years, his determination to find other survivors had been slowly worn away with each new, empty city. As his loneliness grew, so too did his fear. Those buildings which remained standing after the holocaust became grey monolithic giants which watched his every move. Lifeless machinery took the form of menacing metallic skeletons whose spindly arms reached out to ensnare him. And worst of all was the silence, the unbearable sound of nothingness. Only the wind racing between the buildings served to give the cities any noise and even that sounded like ominous laughter which mocked him.

And so it was that the last man on Earth had imprisoned himself in the building he had taken as home. There he sat with only vague memories for company. Until one day, the telephone rang . . .

A cacophony of bells clattered throughout the house. The man glared in disbelief at the ringing instrument. He began to think that the years of silence had distorted his mind. But it seemed so real.

Tentatively, he extended a sweating palm towards the telephone. He could feel the vibrations of the bell in the air around the phone. This was no dream – the telephone was ringing!

With renewed hope and a sudden rush of adrenalin, the man snatched the receiver from its cradle and with almost uncontrollable enthusiasm all but shouted into the mouth-piece.

'Hello' he spluttered.

A voice, the first he had heard in decades, spoke clearly and precisely. 'Is that 01 947 5624?'. It was a woman's voice.

The man could hardly believe it. There was someone else alive and not only that, but a woman too. His mind raced, suddenly aware that he had no idea what to say. He checked the number on the dial. It wasn't the number the girl had asked for but he didn't care.

'My God, I don't believe it. Where are you for Christ sake', he asked.

'Er, I'm trying to reach a London number, 947 5624 . . . is that you?' came the woman's soft, inviting voice.

The man was taken aback. What the hell did it matter what his number was?

'No, that isn't my number, but listen, I can't believe . . . ' he was suddenly interrupted by the woman.

'I'm very sorry, I must have dialed a wrong number' she said and put the phone down.

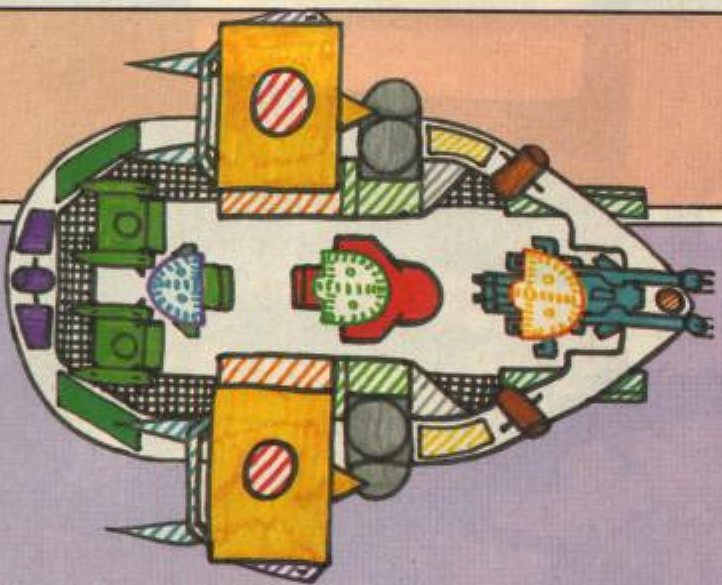
The buzz of the disconnected line screamed down the phone at the man who looked at the receiver in horror as the realisation of finality hit him.

The last man on Earth sat in silence . . .

OCEAN'S PLATOON COMPETITION

All you had to do to enter this competition was find out which route led to the bunker. Easy peasy lemon squeezy, don't you think? There were loads of entries, and the correct route was 'E'. But, all you want to know is who was the first person 'plucked' out of the helmet. Well it was . . . patience, patience, wait for it, **Stewart Kenny** from Edinburgh, Scotland. Well done, Stewart you're going to be the proud owner of a Saisho Video Player, the *Platoon* film and a copy of the game courtesy of the Merry Men from Manchester. They also want to give away a copy of their new game to 20 runners-up . . .

Gary David Salt, Cumbria, LA13 0PY; Craig Poxon, Essex, CM2 6QD; William Kabumenos, Liverpool, L17 2AJ; Colin Meldrum, Stirling, FK7 9LS; Mrs R Boyden, London, E17 5HH; Frederick Afford, Berks, RG6 1QB; Yannick Townsend, East Sussex, TN31 7EN; Oliver Gallienne, Glos, GL19 3JS; Martin Warnett, S Wales, CF1 9HQ; Paul Baharrell, Milton Keynes, MK11 1NS; 24556195 L/CPL Harvey 5PL, BFPO 807; Chris Phillips, Nr Halifax, HX4 4PS; Dean Carter, Dyfed, SA4 1TS; Nigel Booth, West Yorks, HX2 9UZ; Cheryl Beeby, Northants, NN15 7DZ; Roger Wardle, Shropshire, SY12 2JU; Robin Badcock, West Yorks, WF2 6AF; Stewart Valentine, Scotland, AB2 8FB; Reuben Senior, Sheffield, S3 9HG; Tina Porter, Norfolk, NR13 5AE.



HOVERCOMP

Another company being very generous at Christmas was Electronic Arts, who offered to take two readers to Brands Hatch Hoverschool to compete in a race with two of the ZZAP! crew (God help them if it's the boy racers Julian and Steve). All you had to do to enter this competition was design a futuristic Hovercraft, and there were some really impressive entries. The best two came from **Robert Ivan Farley**, Northamptonshire NN14 1PD and **David Stewart**, Wiltshire, SN13 9JD, who'll both soon be on their way to Brands Hatch.

There are also 20 runners-up prizes of copies of *PHM Pegasus* . . .

Spencer Kelly, West Yorkshire, BD19 3BD; Chris Nelson, Scotland, PA2 8QS; The Rat, Coventry, CV2 3JU; K Spurdle, Essex, RM11 1JP; Mr A Healey, Lancs, BL3 4NE; Egon Hansen, Hull, HU10 6NF; P Hansen, Hull, HU10 6NF; Tony Hughes, Manchester, M27 3HD; David Wilson, Perthshire, Scotland; Tim Harrisson, Norfolk, NR8 6PP; Peter Taski, Glos, GL11 4QF; Lee Crawley, South Yorkshire, S71 2JW; Chris Nelson, Devon, EX10 9AH; Paul Spraggons, Middlesex, TW1 1ER; Timothy Berry, Cornwall, TR16 5HR; Gareth Pitt, West Midlands, B73 6EL; Ian Miller, Eastbourne, East Sussex; William Ferguson, Hants, PO9 2UQ; Iain Coffield, Scotland, AB5 2RG; Graham Stevens, Essex, SS8 9RP;

TOP 40 VOTING CHART WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! t-shirt): William Callaghan, Tipton, DY4 8AS.
RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T.Shirt and Cap): Lionel J Dorval, Ilford, IG2 7PL; R J Lake, Sawbridgeworth, CM21 9JR; Marcos Simpson, Middlesex, HA6 1AN; Nigel Nisbeth, Leeds 6, LS6 1QL.

HEWSON WORDSQUARE

Here's another seasy leasy pemon queezy competition for everyone to enter. All you had to do was find the ten Hewson games in the wordsquare. And no, Hewson don't have a game called 'Sorry Folks' or 'Hoodunit', but they do have games called *Zynaps, Ranarama, Exolon, Uridium, Lunar Attack, Nebulus, Eagles, Paradroid, Southern Belle* and *Evening Star*. All those who found all hidden games had a chance of winning a Compact Disk Ghettoblaster . . . but the lucky bloke who will be listening to his favourite sounds is **Carl Goodwin**, Leicester, LE4 0QN. There are also copies of *Four Smash Hits* compilation to give away, and they're currently winging their way to the following people . . .

Anthony Godlewski, Surrey, RH1 6NX; Paul Bailey, Merseyside, L37 6EY; Colin Taylor, Liverpool 4, L4 5TP; Barry Brailsford, Staffs, WS15 2QP; D R Dickerson, Cambs, PE18 8BN; Lee Harrison, West Midlands, B91 2EU; Alan Robertson, Glasgow, G65 7EN; Adrian Lindley, West Yorks, BD4 9RP; Paul Hanlon, Stafford, ST16 1LQ; Danny Dignan, Manchester, M9 1JP; Andrew Reynolds, Surrey, KT16 9JJ; R Blandford, Notts, DN22 7EB; Anthony Quansah, West Yorkshire, WF2 0AA; Neil Cloke, Kent, TN23 2UH; Stephen Harris, London, SE21 8BS; Brian Newnes, South Wirral, L66 1RP; Darren Richardson, Belfast, BT8 4RJ; John Glasgow, London, E16 3AG; Shaun Reynolds, Hants, PO12 2PL; Jason Handy, Gloucester, GL2 0AH; Alan Parkinson, Cheshire, WA4 1XA; Carol Sharpe, Cambs, PE1 5JQ; Carlos Shead, London, W14 AOU; Peter Simpson, Co Durham, DL14 0PR; P D English, Southampton, SO2 6JP.



Here's Paul Mason of Kindstanding, Birmingham, who won a brilliant synthesiser in the Rastan Musicomp

READERS AWARDS

TEN WINNERS (£30 worth of software plus ZZAP! t-shirt): Gary Williams, Runcorn, WA7 6AN; Robert Johnson, Pontypool, NP4 ODE; Stuart Mugford, Stevenage, SG1 5JH; Peter Young, Amble Morpeth, NE65 OLX; Greg Asbury, Wolverhampton, WV10 7HE; Simon Evans, Kings Lynn, PE32 1AA; Conrad Patton, Portadown, BT63 5SY; Wayne Ward, Wolverhampton, WV10 7TL; Ian Moria, Ascot, SL5 9HX; Dean Moxhay, Brighton, BN1

Well that's it me old mateys – we have come to the end once more, but before I go I want to say something to all the girlies out there, IF there are any. Why don't we hear from you? I really don't believe that there are so few girlie computer users out there. Lloyd tells me he hardly gets any letters in the Rrap from females, and I hardly get any competition entries – so whether you're a Mum, Sister or Niece who uses the trusty old Commodore 64, or if you actually own your own, let's hear from you.

OK, that's it. If you want to write, it's the usual address: GLENYS POWELL ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW. SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

TTFN!



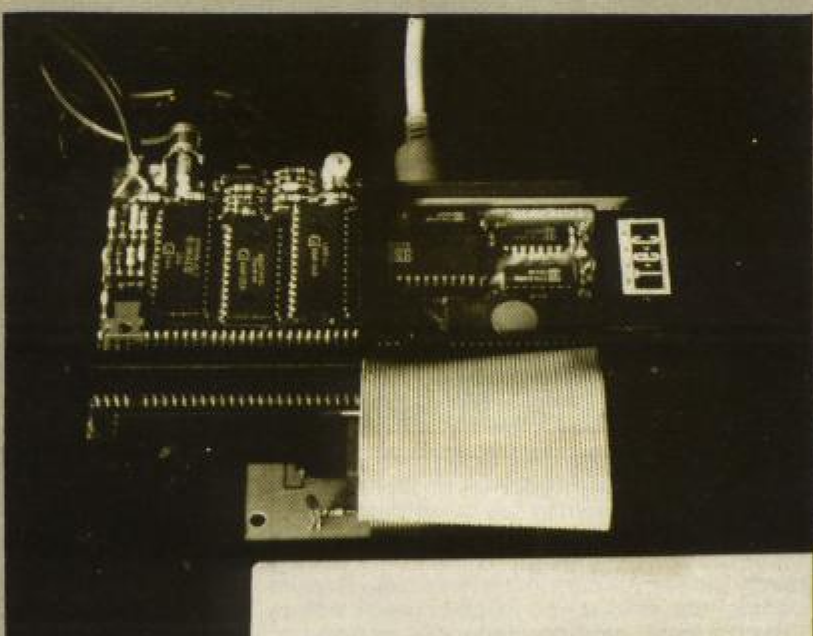
WHAT'S New

AMAZING AMIGA EMULATOR



An incredible 64 add-on which will undoubtedly change the face of the Commodore computing market overnight reached the ZZAP! office mere hours before this issue went to press. Norwegian hardware design house, Blue Tec, have just announced the *Amulator*. After spending the last 20 months analysing the functions of the Amiga's four custom chips, (the 'Fat Agnus' animation chip, 'Denise', the graphics chip, 'Paula', the sound/peripherals chip and 'Gary', the control chip) they have managed to put together a system which plugs into the user port of a Commodore 64 and gives it enough 16-bit power to emulate Amiga performance. A mammoth task indeed, but the *Amulator*'s replica chips have now been perfected and from what we've seen, Blue Tec's endeavours have been successful.

The unit comes complete with a mouse and 512K of RAM with the Kikstart boot-up system built in, ostensibly making it compatible with all A500 software. The prototype pictured here came with some supercompacted sample programs on 5¼ inch disk, readable by a standard 1541 drive, but the basic *Amulator* system supplied to the consumer would require the Amiga-style 3½ inch disk drive to run memory-guzzling commercial software. However, plans are also going ahead to market a bundled package comprising the *Amulator* unit, a suitable drive and a slightly upgraded version of Amigados V1.2. The *Amulator* alone is soon to go on sale in Norway for 2199 Kr (around £189), with the *Amulator* and disk drive package going for 3299 Kr (about £280). A British company is currently being sought to distribute the *Amulator*, and we'll be reviewing it as soon as it becomes widely available.



B·L·U·E T·e·C

PLAY IT AGAIN, SEVERIANO

Hot on the heels of *World Class Leaderboard* comes the first volume in the *World Famous Courses* series.

Although adopting the same format, viewpoint and control method as previous *Leaderboards*, *World Famous Courses* sports a much lower price tag, and budding club-swingers have the opportunity of strutting their golfing tackle around four new courses: Pebble Beach, perched on a cliff-top; the 'virtually unbeatable' Colonial; Royal and Ancient's Muirfield, and the tortuous, watery Glenmoor, designed by those devilish fiends at Access.

The package does not require any existing *Leaderboard* programs, and comes at the generous mid-range price of £4.99 on tape and £6.99 on disk.

RAUNCHY RICOCHET RE-RELEASES

The first batch of budget oldies has arrived within these walls courtesy of the Mastertronic 'Ricochet' label. Some have been hailed as legends in their own brief lifetime, others are . . . well, you'll just have to take a glance back at the reviews in previous editions of ZZAP!

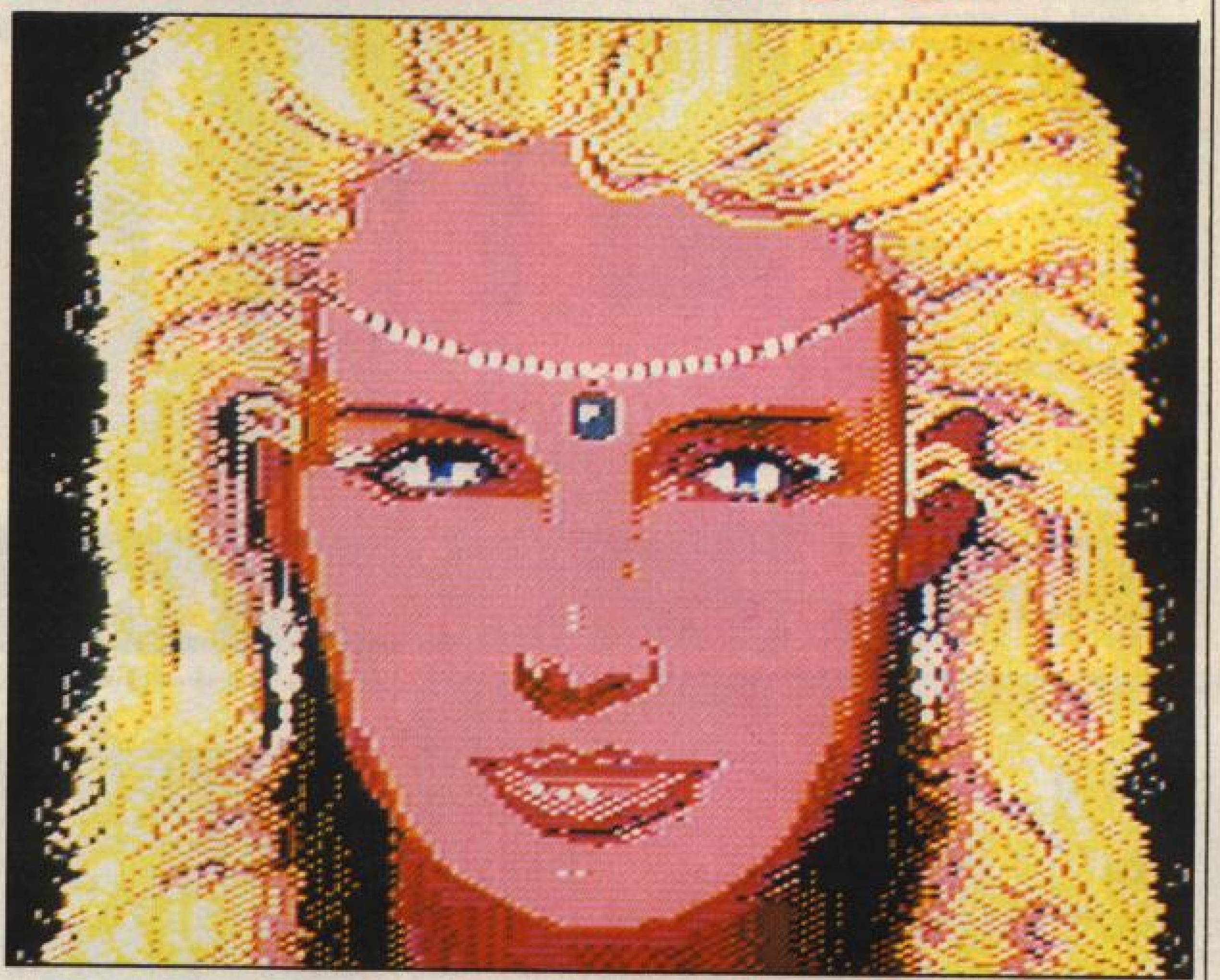
The games are, in alphabetical order, *Bazooka Bill*, *Ghostbusters*, *Judge Dredd*, *Knuckle Busters* and *Way of the Exploding Fist*, and all are currently retailing for £1.99.

COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU

Sandwiched between the highly successful *Defender of the Crown* and the forthcoming *SDI* is Cinemaware's latest 64 program, *Sinbad and the Throne of the Falcon.* Inspired by the character from the 15th Century Arabian classic, *The Thousand and One Nights* and the subsequent sequence of cinematic derivations, it promises a host of interactive scenarios and plenty of puzzling action.

On his deathbed, the Caliph of Damaron has been transformed mysteriously into a falcon. Realising the dangers that menace a kingdom without a monarch, Sinbad leaves for Damaron immediately to restore harmony. At this point, the player takes over the role of Sinbad and marshals the Caliph's forces to guard the city, watch over the prince and princess, and undertake a perilous journey to discover how the Caliph can be restored to his former self.

The game combines elements of strategy, adventure and arcade sequences to create an overall impression of interactive fiction. Sinbad is presented with three basic scenarios: a map of the world within which he can move with virtual freedom, an hourglass which brings his mission closer to failure, and a city scenario, which displays the fluctuating state of the





Caliph's dominion.

The greatest opponent against Sinbad is the short time allotted for his task, but other hostiles take the form of a series of characters, creatures and elemental hazards. Hostiles encountered include the Prince Camaral, who provides the greatest danger as he follows in your footsteps waiting for a mistake, the foul Pteranaxos and the legendary Cyclops. More dubious characters include the terrible Libitina, renowned for her dark powers, but who's vital to your success. Similarly essential are the faithful Genie, the Gypsy who only responds to those with a sympathetic ear and the Shaman, whose exhortations need to be noted.

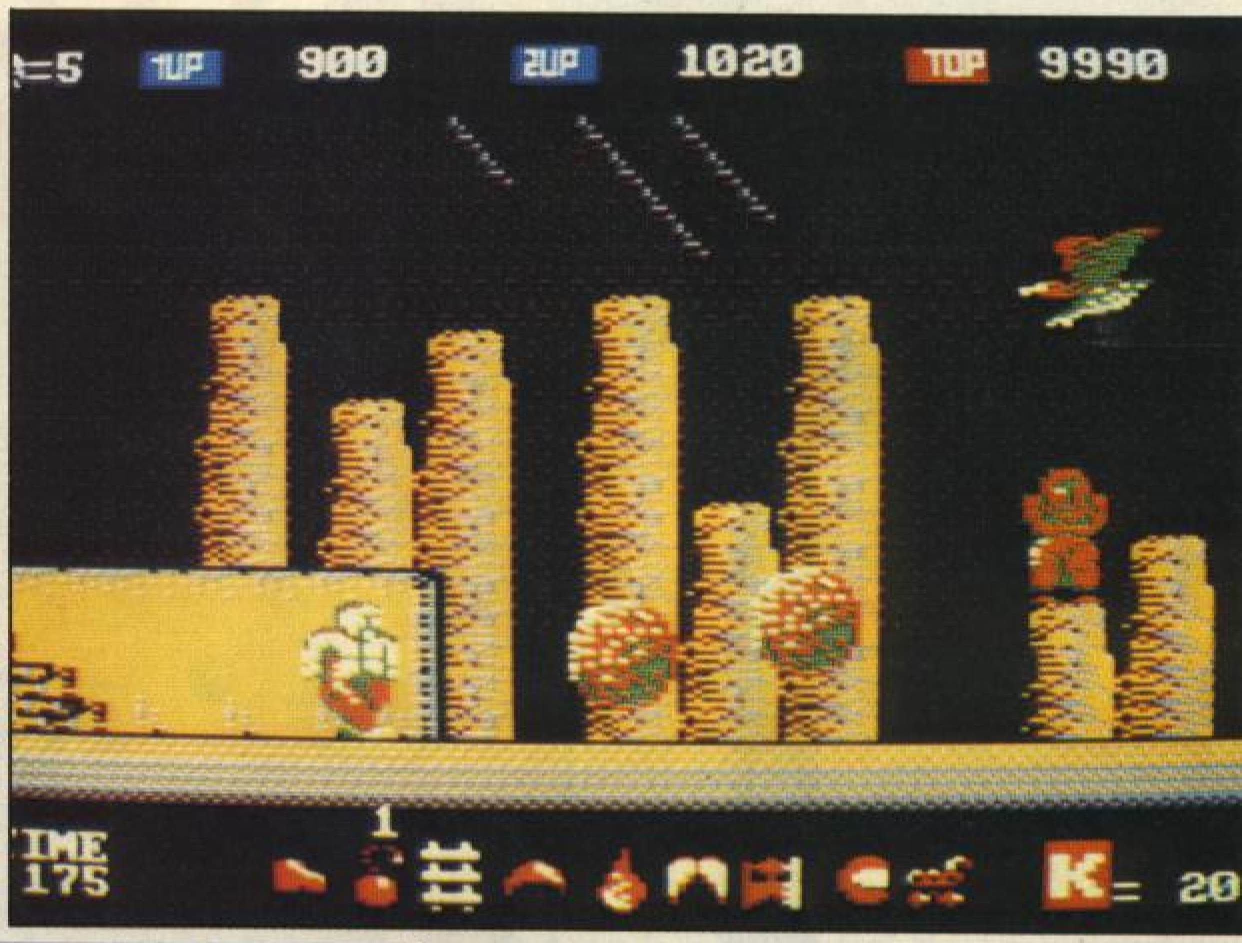
Cinemaware seem to have captured the spirit of the piece, as you can see from the accompanying screenshots; whether the gameplay will fulfil the prophecy is another matter. Watch these pages for an impending review.



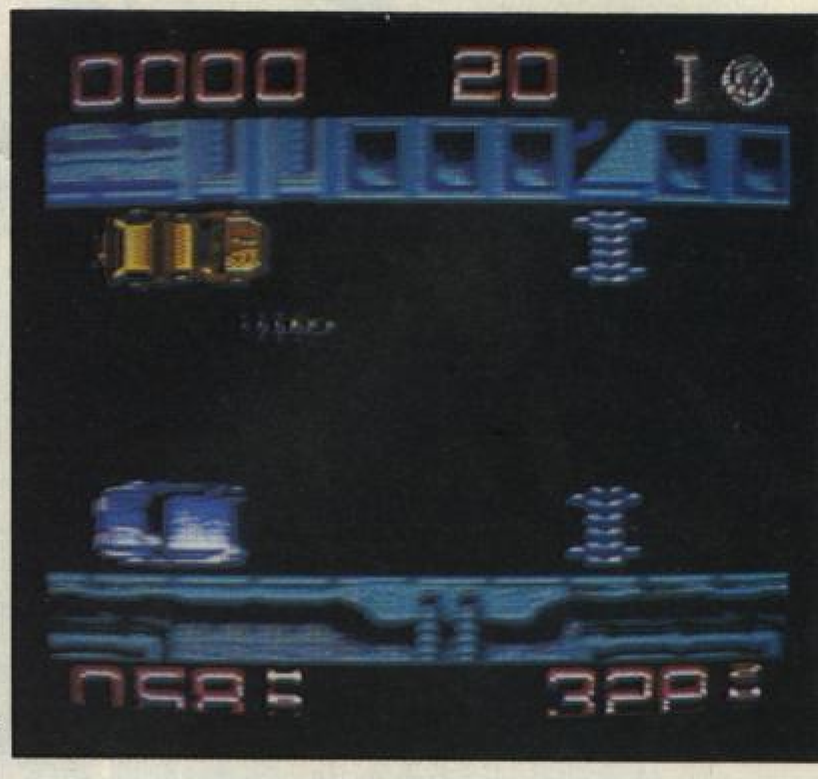
In the true tradition of horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups comes CRL's *Road Warrior*, from the designers of *Plasmatron* and *Discovery*. Loosely derivative of the ageing *Spy Hunter*, it boasts intense action and addictiveness set over a series of increasingly difficult levels. All cars are deemed hazards and are destroyed. When a predetermined number have been blasted away, the next stage is tackled with tougher opponents. An early version is pictured here, so we'll have to wait until the final product arrives in the office.

Electric Dreams have just announced the conversion of Data East's coin-op, *Karnov*, which is very much in the same mould as *Ghosts and Goblins*, casting the player in the role of a gymnastic bulging biceps-type who battles his way across a perilous horizontally scrolling landscape. The ultimate goal is the castle of a cruel and terrible king who has been making misery and wreaking ruin on Karnov's people for no better reason than self-indulgence.

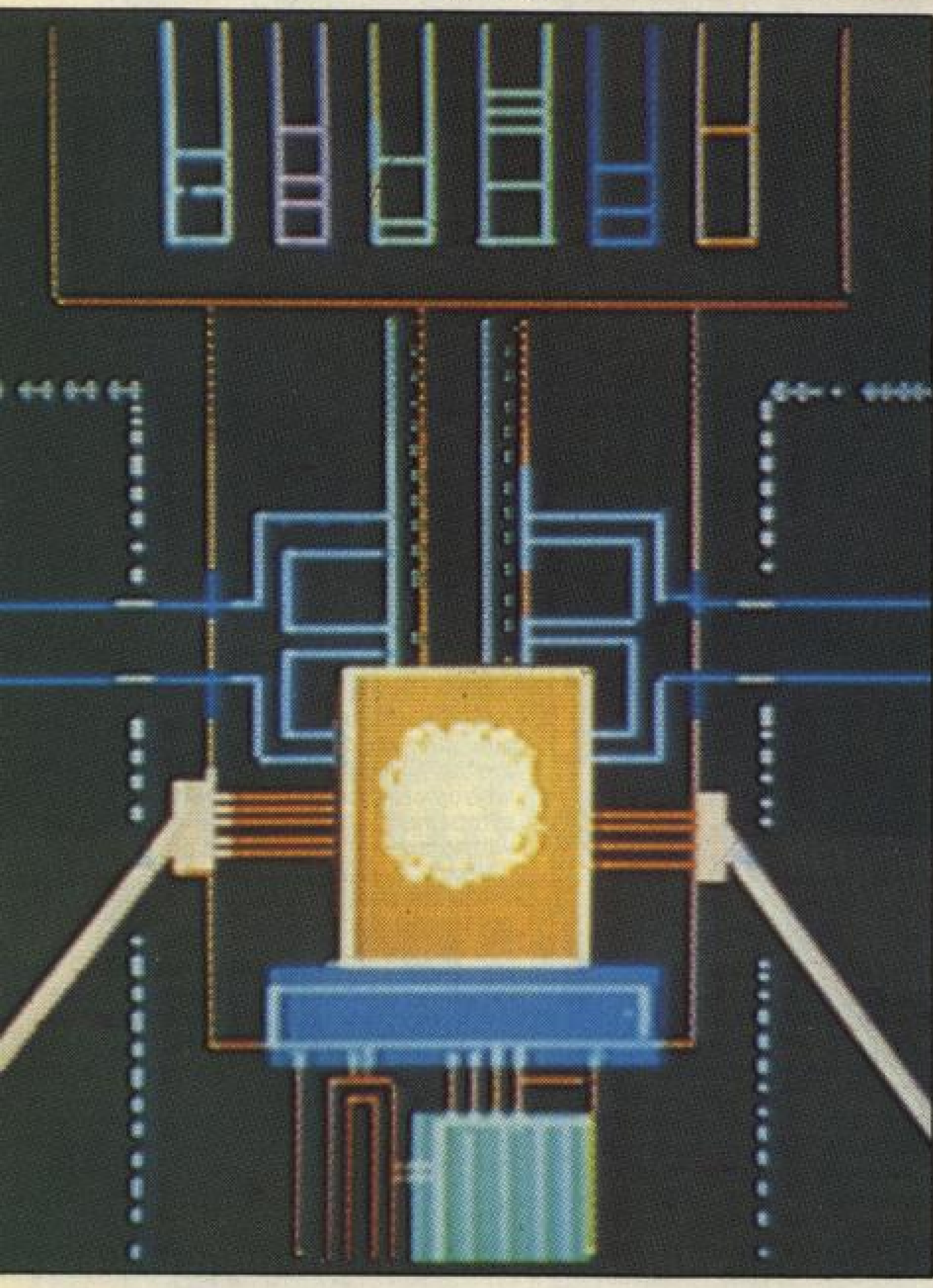
To help combat against animated Statues, sword-wielding Zombies and enormous Dragons, useful items are gathered along the route. As you can see from the screenshot, it bears close comparison to the arcade original, with pledged gameplay to match. For more details, see the review of the coin-op version in Issue 30, otherwise wait with sweating palms for the forthcoming comments in ZZAP!



► **Electric Dreams' up-and-coming *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* variant, *Karnov***



► **CRL's latest game presents some pleasant graphics within a sideways *Spy Hunter* format**



► **Coming soon from US Gold: *Laser Tag***

Officially licensed from the popular children's toy, *Lazer Tag* is soon to set your screens alight.

Set in the year 3010, the player takes the role of a Rookie Cadet at the Lazer Tag Training School and seeks promotion from lowly Neophyte to legendary Duellist over six stages of furious blasting action.

Features such as reflecting prisms and revolving terminals enhance the basic shoot 'em up structure. Intense adrenalin-pumping action is promised; whether or not the potential is fulfilled will be revealed in a review, coming soon to a newsagent's near you . . .



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